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JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS:
A JORDANIAN VIEW
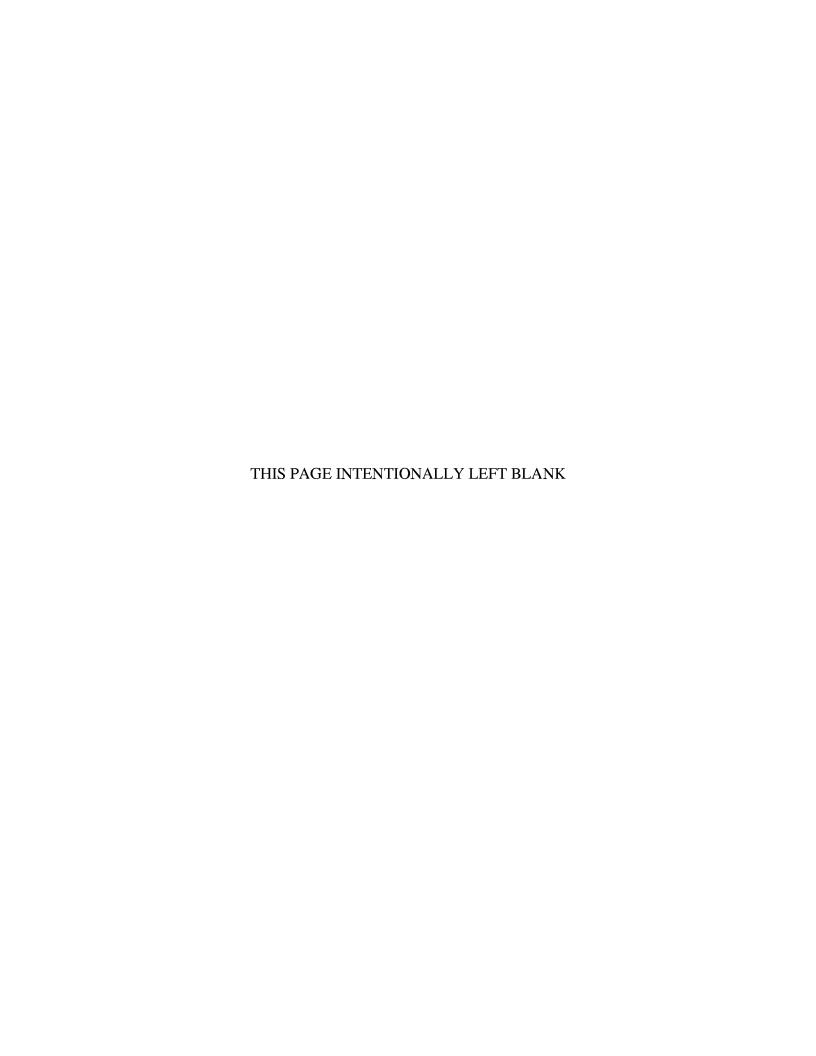
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JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS: A JORDANIAN VIEW

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Jordanian – Palestinian relations are deeply rooted in history. They date back to the first quarter of the twentieth century, to the period of British and French involvement in the region in the aftermath of World War I, and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Since the early days of the British mandate, the two peoples, Jordanian and Palestinian, found themselves obliged to interact with each other due to geographic, social, economic and demographic considerations. Following the decision to unite the West Bank and Transjordan to make up the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1950, the West Bank and its people were in the process of integration within Jordan until war halted progress in 1967. This study presents the evolution of Jordanian – Palestinian relations through history. These relations have been both challenged by hardships and influenced by several other Arab states. The current peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians, which could bring about an independent Palestinian state, requires that Jordanians and Palestinians restructure their relations in order to be of mutual benefit.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Jordanian-Palestinian relations have received much attention in the recent literature. This was especially true after Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the first Oslo accord in 1993, and again after the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan reached its own bilateral agreement with Israel a year later. It is hoped that the resumption of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians will lead to an independent Palestinian state, or another form that is separate from Jordan. Jordanian-Palestinian relations, however, still represent an unresolved issue in Jordanian politics. With these developments, the Jordanians, apparently, have sensed the need to restructure these relations.

This work focuses on the dynamics of Jordanian-Palestinian relations; dynamics that could not be traced accurately apart from the historical context that sustained them. The two sides have yet to decide on the shape of their relations, awaiting the outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations before doing so. However, Jordanian-Palestinian relations could reach either a confederation or separation on their own, without abandoning other formulas available to both sides.

B. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The roots of Jordanian-Palestinian relations date back to the early twentieth century and the aftermath of the First World War. At that time, the British and French governments decided to partition and control the Arab world. Before then, most of the region had been part of the Ottoman Empire.

Transjordan was a governorate under Syria. In the years preceding the First World War, the British government sought the aid of the Arab world in its revolt against the Ottomans. The Sharif Hussein, ruler of Hedjaz and keeper of the Holy Places of Mecca, realized the Ottoman weakness as early as 1914. He then established contact with the British in Egypt in order to rebel against the Ottomans in return for recognition of an Arab empire to be ruled by his dynasty. But the British did not commit themselves by making any guarantees or promises. In the meantime, the British were negotiating with

Arab nationalists, in Syria to revolt against the Ottomans. The Arabs were represented by the Young Arab Society. However, the British were hesitant to give the Arab nationalists any guarantees of independence. When the Ottoman Empire entered World War I it sided with the Germans.

Sharif Hussein did not respond to the Ottoman Caliph's call for holy war. However, the British wanted the Arab forces to be quickly drawn into the war quickly. The Sharif was, instead, looking to achieve the Arab aspirations of independence. The British exerted considerable pressure on the Sharif and the people of Hedjaz to enter the war. Accordingly, by mid-1915, Hussein started diplomatic talks with Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt. The Sharif-McMahon correspondence, which continued until early 1916, indicates that the British promised to consider Arab independence after the war. The Arab Great Revolt was announced on June 10, 1916. Hussein and his forces started the revolt against the Turks from Hedjaz, moved to Transjordan and then pushed north to Syria, where his son Faisal and Arab nationalists were conducting their fight in Syria.

As the war ended in the defeat of Germany and its allies (the Central Powers), the victor countries started drawing the maps of the new areas acquired. Britain and France agreed to divide up the Arab world by conducting secret talks, culminated in the Sykes-Picot Agreement on May 16, 1916. They divided the area into zones of influence –Britain got Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine; while France got Syria and Lebanon. On November 2, 1917 the Balfour Declaration was issued, pledging British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The Arabs were unaware that the British government, after promising to support Arab independence, had concluded two secret agreements that conflicted with Arab aspirations – the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration.[1]

On July 24, 1922, Palestine was put under the "mandate" system, i.e., under British control, which specified that there would be a Jewish homeland inside Palestine, but that the rights of the native Palestinians would not be affected. However, the civil

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[1] Sami Hadawi, *Bitter Harvest: A Modern History of Palestine.* Brooklyn, New York: Olive Branch Press, 1983.

administration was established in Palestine on July 1, 1920, giving many British Zionist Jews key positions. The Arab opposition to the mandate therefore, refused to yield to what they perceived to be a broken promise. What ensued developed into violent riots between 1920 and 1939.

On February 19, 1947 the British government terminated the mandate and handed the Palestine issue over to the United Nations. On November 29, 1947, the United Nations adopted the partition plan of Palestine between Arabs and Jews, whereas the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem were given international status. Whereas the Arabs rejected the partition, the Jews accepted it, and on May 14, 1948 the Jewish state was established.

Emir Abdullah Bin Sharif Hussein bin Ali arrived in Amman on March 2, 1921, leading an army of more than 2000 tribesmen, threatening to conquer Syria from French mandatory. The British dissuaded the Emir from taking any military actions or campaigns against the French. The Emir then campaigned in Transjordan and imposed the *fait accompli* that led the British to recognize him as ruler of Transjordan under supervision of the British High Commissioner in Palestine.

As soon as Emir Abdullah set up his headquarters in Ma'an, a southern part of Jordan, he received a warm welcome from the inhabitants of Transjordan. This caused the British to realize that the popularity of the Emir would also strengthen his stand in his endeavor to rule Transjordan. Precipitating this realization, on September 2, 1920, before Abdullah's arrival, a number of Transjordanian representatives met at Um Qays to voice their demands to the British government. These demands, along with the British response, gave rise to what were called the Um Qays Treaty.[2] The Transjordanian's urgent demand was for the establishment of an independent national government under the leadership of an Arab Emir, on condition that this government should in no way be connected with the government of Palestine. The Transjordanians realized how dangerous the Balfour Declaration was to the destiny of Palestine because it became a homeland for the Jews, causing them to insist on being part of an entity that was separate

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[2] Adnan Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom.* Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003.

from that of Palestine. The early realization of this entity contributed to the formation of the Transjordanian identity that has been recognized and respected worldwide. Conscious of his popularity among the Transjordanian population, the British nominated the Emir to rule Transjordan as agreed between the Emir and Winston Churchill, the British Colonial Secretary, in Jerusalem on March 17, 1921.

Because Transjordan and Palestine were administered under the same mandate, the British officials used both Amman and Jerusalem as centers of their administration, appointing Palestinian officials to work in Transjordan's administration. The British sent units from the Arab Legion to maintain security in Palestine. Transjordan officials reported to British officials in Palestine, since the chief British mandate administrator and his staff were stationed there. Trade and business relations between people of both countries started to flourish, the interaction increasing considerably after the Emir disclosed his concern about the Palestinian question.

Following the Churchill-Abdullah agreement in late March 1921, the British took certain measures in order to give Transjordan a legal status. The British authorities disjoined Transjordan from the provisions of the mandate. Accordingly, Transjordan was put under a separate administration with clearly defined borders.

As a result of negotiations held in October 1922 between the Emir and the British government representative, Sir Herbert Samuel, the British Commissioner of Palestine announced on April 25, 1923 that subject to the approval of the League of Nations, his government would recognize the existence of an independent government in Transjordan under the rule of Emir Abdullah.[3] The Emir started working with his political aides and British advisers to lay the foundation of the new administration in Jordan. In April 1923, the first government was formed, and a consultative council was renamed four months later. On May 15, 1923, within the context of a treaty between the fledgling state and Britain, Jordan was declared independent. Britain retained control over Jordan's military and foreign policy, as well as its budgetary supervision.

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[3] Naseer H. Aruri, *Jordan: A Study in Political Development (1921-1965)*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972.

Britain and Transjordan took a further step in the direction of Jordanian self-government in 1928, when they agreed to a new treaty that relaxed British controls, while still providing for British oversight on financial matters and foreign policy.[4] They agreed to promulgate a constitution called the Organic Law. Then, in 1929, a legislative council was installed in the place of the old executive council. In 1934, a new agreement with Britain allowed the Emir to set up consular representation in Arab countries.[5]

The Arab Legion was further organized by British officers under the command of F. G. Peake, eventually becoming highly effective under the command of Peake's successor in 1939, General John Baghot Glubb.

The Emir was an ally of Britain during World War II, as his father had been during World War I. Units of the Arab Legion served effectively alongside British forces in 1941, overthrowing the pro-Nazi regime led by Rashid Ali that had taken power in Iraq. However, in so doing, the Emir was still hoping that his dream of building a greater Syria under his dynasty would come true. During the World War II years, the Emir participated in the inter-Arab preliminary meetings that led to the formation of the Arab League in Cairo in March 1945.

In March 1946, the British-Transjordanian treaty signed in London declared the independence of Jordan whereby Jordan was granted the status of being a fully sovereign state. Transjordan was then proclaimed to be a kingdom, adopting a new constitution to replace the 1928 Organic Law.

Due to Arab rejection of the Balfour Declaration, coupled with the Jewish migration to Palestine and the aggressive spirit of the Jewish armed organizations toward the Arabs, many massacres against the Arab Palestinians took place at different periods of time from 1920-1947. Because the British authorities realized the huge amounts of resources and large number of troops were necessary to maintain peace, in 1947 they decided to present the Palestinian problem to the UN.[6]

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[4] Helen Chapin Metz, *Jordan: A Country Study*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, December 1989.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Hadawi, *BitterHarvest*.

During the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the Arab Legion fought better than other forces in defense of Palestine, and was able to secure the West Bank and part of Jerusalem from imminent Jewish occupation. The war resulted in the migration of more than half a million Palestinians to the East Bank of Jordan. This migration later brought about a change in the demographic and political structure of the country whose population, at the time, was about a half million. On December 1, 1948, the Palestinian and Transjordanian delegates favored the joining of Palestine with Jordan to form the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as agreed upon in the Jericho meeting.

The Palestinian-Jordanian early relations and contacts took place during the British mandate, at which time the Palestinian middle class flourished and became skillful civil servants, often being sent to Jordan to provide civil service to the bureaucracy.[7]. Unlike the Palestinians, the Transjordanians had neither developed a middle class, nor formed a practical proletariat. The civil servants were generally Palestinians, Circassians, and Syrians, who had all come to Jordan after the demise of King Faisal's government in Syria in 1920 at the hands of French imperialists. The Palestinian civil servants staffing the Transjordan bureaucracy (who became powerful in implementing policies and in governance), along with the large number of immigrants who moved to the country after the war of 1948, opened the door for closer relations among Transjordanians and Palestinians having different identities and different allegiances.

Since the Great Arab Revolt of 1916, led by Sharif Hussein Bin Ali against the Ottoman Empire, the Hashemites have been associated with the federal notion of the establishment of an Arab state. Partly in response to this, a confederation had been sought by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. However, it should be noted that the majority of Arabs have, without discrimination, favored the confederalist option toward Arab unity.[8] However, hot debates have taken place in the Arab world over the best approach to

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[7] Aruri, *Jordan.*

[8] Kamal S. Salibi, *A Modern History of Jordan.* London: I. B. Tauris, 1993.

achieve such a unity. The revolutionary approach did not succeed in persuading Jordanian public opinion, so its leadership chose to be cautious, working toward unification more gradually.

On the one hand, the collusion between Britain and France and local Arab leaders created religious tension and national separatist forces in Arabia, Egypt and Syria. On the other hand, the confederational scheme was imposed from the outside to the dislike of a majority of the Arab populace at the time. In the wake of World War I, after government in Arab regions had been formalized with the imposition of the political and territorial arrangements of the colonial powers, a confederation was institutionalized in 1945 by the adoption of the charter of the League of Arab States.[9]

The Hashemites stuck to their federal idea. King Abdullah, the founder of the modern state of Jordan, pursued it as he tried to unite Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria into a single entity. However, his efforts only succeeded in Palestine, being rejected by other pro-confederacy Arabs. After a time of political and military struggle between the Israelis, the British (along some Arab countries), he managed to unite Jordan and the West Bank in 1950.

The annexation of the West Bank in 1950 and the assassination of King Abdullah by four young Palestinians in 1951 both played important roles in hastening the initial democratization of the political system in Jordan.[10] The direct effect of these two events was to transfer the power from one king to the palace group, an entity created by the annexation of the West Bank. The migration of more than half a million Palestinians to Jordan after the 1948 war transformed Jordanian society by giving it a relatively well-trained middle class, along with a higher rate of urbanization.

The Palestinians expressed their will to participate in politics, demanding that the prevailing patriarchal system be exchanged for a parliamentary democracy, as had been previously promised. They had to deal with the powerful palace politician group, whose

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[9] For more, see Bruce Maddy-Weizman, *The Crystallization of the Arab State System: 1945-1954.* Syracuse University Press, 1993.

[10] Abdullah was assassinated by a young Palestinian on July 20, 1951 as he was entering the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem for the Friday prayer.

prominence increased after the assassination of King Abdullah. However, the priority during this time was given to the succession of King Abdullah and the future of the country.

Crown Prince Talal, who had been under medical treatment abroad, was proclaimed king as the legitimate heir to the throne. This refuted rumors that Amir Nayef, the Regent who aspired to unite with Iraq under the Hashemite crown, would be the king. Such rumors provoked both internal and external oppositionthat Syria and Saudi Arabia be included. Tawfiq Abul-Huda, a prominent person among the palace group, presided over the Cabinet and skillfully managed the crisis resulting from the assassination, but particularly the succession problem. On September 4, 1951 the Jordanian Cabinet unanimously agreed that Prince Talal be proclaimed king, and that Prince Hussein, his son, be crown prince.

A new constitution was promulgated on January 2, 1952, making the Prime Minister and his Cabinet accountable to the House of Representatives. The constitution was very democratic, making the king a constitutional monarch, and allowing the people and their representatives to participate in the political system and monitor executive authority.

The unification of the two banks led to a change in the legislative branch of the government, increasing the deputies' seats in the House of Representatives from 20 to 40, thereby giving equal representation to the two banks. Political parties were formed, while opposition parties came into existence. Due to Talal's illness and inability to rule properly, Crown Prince Hussein returned to Jordan and was inaugurated as king of Jordan on May 2, 1953. His brother Hassan was eventually named crown prince when he was 16 years old.

King Hussein inherited a country that was becoming unstable and highly politicized, under pressure from Palestinians due to their greater complications and grievances. However, the monarchy was exposed to the most intense pressures during the 1950s and 1960s. By mid-1950s, political parties flourished and opposition groups and parties formed, such as the Communist and the Baath Parties (i.e., the Syrian-centered Socialist Pan-Arab Party). The country was characterized by having a highly permeable

society, being in the early stages of its political development and, therefore, susceptible to outside influence (i.e., to having its political strings pulled from outside Jordan).[11] The Egyptian President Jamal Abdel Nasser's radio propaganda aroused the Palestinians in Jordan to demonstrate against the Hashemites' relations and connections with the West, especially with Britain.[12] Also, the Egyptian and Syrian regimes were able to mobilize and incite the Palestinian and Arab nationalists to take to the streets in Jordan in 1955, contesting Hussein's intentions to join the US and British-sponsored Baghdad Pact against Soviet expansion in the region.[13]

The Jordanian government incorporated many different, flexible measures in order to deal with the increasingly hostile environments, especially in the West Bank, where most demonstrations took place at the hands of opposition parties. Security forces were used to counter the tactics of infiltration, harassment and punishment used by subversive groups. Extremists and activists were dealt with harshly. For example, students might be expelled from schools, prevented from traveling abroad for study, or denied re-entry after studying abroad. Opposition parties were harassed and punished and some were imprisoned, while parties that supported the government were rewarded.[14]

The freest elections to that time in Jordan were conducted in October 1956, marking the first determined democratic move in the history of Jordan. An opposition party, namely the National Socialist Party, won the elections and formed a government headed by Suleiman Nabulsi. The newly formed government took immediate steps toward shifting Jordan's orientation from its traditional British ties to a more pro-Egypt and pro-Syria stance. The Tripartite Aggression on Egypt came almost a week after the formation of the government.

In 1957, the throne was again exposed to a crisis when a group of military officers, calling themselves the Free Officers, plotted to overthrow the king. Immediately

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[11] Arthur R. Day, *East Bank/West Bank: Jordan and the Prospects*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1986.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Amnon Cohen, *Political Parties in the West Bank Under the Jordanian Regime 1949-1967*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982, pp.239.

following this event, the palace was shaken when the parliament demanded that the king be accountable to it .As a result, the king decided to put an end to the conditions that would undermine his powers by banning political parties and declaring martial law. It was at this time that parties took their work underground, thereby causing the kingdom to be kept under stricter martial law until 1991.

In 1964, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was created by the Arab League Summit. Soon after, this organization, along with the Fatah movement, established earlier, launched its guerrilla operations against Israel from Jordanian territory. Israel retaliated in response to these attacks, the efforts to prevent the guerrilla attacks being regarded as anti-Palestinian. If guerrilla attacks were not prevented, leading to Israeli retaliation, the Jordanian army, in turn, was criticized for not protecting Palestinian camps and villages. In 1966, Jordan banned the PLO, an action that led to border clashes with Syria.

Soon after, another event shocked the region: the Six-Day War that resulted in the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula. A new wave of Palestinians, particularly those residing in refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza, were forced to flee, yet again, from what was left of historical Palestine. They sought shelter in countries such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. Jordan, alone, received more than 300,000 new Palestinian immigrants.[15] At this point the Jordanian demographic structure was transformed, tipping the balance in favor of a Palestinian majority. Today, Palestinians in Jordan, most of whom were granted citizenship in the early 1950s, represent over half of the Jordanian population. Beyond mere changes in the demographics, the influx of refugees into Jordan reshaped its political, socioeconomic and cultural life. The government had to adapt its policies to accommodate the new populations. However, the fact that Jordanian citizenship has been granted to Palestinians in Jordan since 1950 has not cancelled the Palestinian right of return and their status as refugees.

After 1967, the PLO embraced Fatah, and other Palestinian groups started to operate from Jordan, despite the government ban. The PLO attacks on Israel brought

continuous Israeli retaliatory actions across the Jordan River, which resulted in the departure and fleeing of Jordanian farmers from rich land to the nearby villages and hills, thereby creating new economic difficulties for the country. The PLO became very powerful in Jordan, developing its base of operations against Israel. Also, it gradually established an authority that rivaled that of the Jordanian government. The situation became intolerable for the Jordanian government and its army, which led to the 1970 civil war, and eventually to the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan to Syria and Lebanon. King Hussein, once again, became the sole ruler in Jordan after the expulsion of the PLO.

In 1988, King Hussein announced the administrative separation between Jordan and the West Bank, sparking an economic crisis in the country. However, the Hashemites have not halted their support and efforts at all regional and international tribunals, presumably in order to highlight the Palestinians' sufferings (and their just cause that needs a fair, comprehensive and permanent settlement). The dynamic of Jordanian-Palestinian relations took a new turn following the first Gulf War in 1991, when Jordan included Palestinians under the Jordanian umbrella during the Madrid Peace Conference. These relations were further disconnected when the Palestinians signed the 1993 Oslo Accord with Israel, preceded by secret talks between both parties without informing Jordan, who preferred to be included in the talks in order to address Jordanian interests, such as the right of return for the refugees.[16]

Jordan reached its own bilateral peace agreement with Israel in 1994. In the Oslo II Accord of 1995, the Palestinian National Authority was established. However, Palestine was still linked by history, economics, and political, social and family ties with its neighbors in Israel and Jordan. For this reason, a Palestinian-Jordanian-Israeli triangle is a strong possibility for the future. Both Jordan and Palestinians have addressed certain issues and conducted separate dealings with Israel on a bilateral basis. However, it seems

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[15] Samir A. Mutawi, *Jordan in the 1967 War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

[16] Mustafa Hamarneh, *Jordanian-Palestinian Relations: Where To?* London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1997.

that the Palestinians are in no hurry to structure their relations with Jordan, waiting for a breakthrough in the often stalemated negotiations with Israel to see how the final arrangement with Israel will look.

The absence of a formal agreement for Jordanian-Palestinian relations creates the likelihood that events relative to Palestinian-Israeli relations, rather than policy decisions, will dictate possibilities for their future. Many events have already taken place since Oslo II that further hampered Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. The most painful blow directed at Palestinian-Israeli peace efforts was the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995 by an Israeli anti-peace activist. Also, the increase in Palestinian suicide bombers, the incessant Israeli retaliation to these bombings, and the recent new Israeli separation wall erected by Sharon have all complicated the situation even more, putting many other impediments on the road to both peace and regional security.

The Jordanian-Palestinian relationship is multi-faceted. For example, it is a relationship between two different peoples (i.e., Jordanian and Palestinian Arabs) on either side of the Jordan River, citizens and residents within Jordan itself; and two different types of leadership and their respective governing bodies. The relationship between the two peoples permeates the contemporary debate about identity in Jordan.[17] The arrival date of Palestinians to Jordan is considered the most appropriate criteria to identify those who have become more assimilated, with the exception of refugees in camps who are still waiting for the day of their return home, or for compensation, according to UN Resolution 242. Since the establishment of the P.A. official talks between the two entities have taken place in the manner more appropriate for state-to-state relations than previously. Even the late King Hussein followed the expected protocol for meetings and receptions, as does his successor, King Abdullah II. Still, their future relations are somewhat unclear.

Awaiting a breakthrough in their often stalemated peace talks with Israel, Palestinians have not yet decided on the shape of their relations with Jordan. Specifically,

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[17] Laurie A. Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity." *Journal of Palestine Studies,* vol. 24, no.4, Summer 1995.

if the Palestinians succeed in establishing a sovereign state Jordan may decide to maintain and develop their existing relations (i.e., coordinating their efforts to create a new confederacy style of relationship, or disengage and cut past relations.) Having no clear vision of how to define Palestinians' relations with Jordan, it is difficult for either side to know how to proceed now. But the external observer might deduce from the PA policy that the Palestinians are seriously looking forward to establishing a separate state. Jordan encourages the Palestinians to discuss such relations in order to be better prepared for future possible outcomes.

As for relations between individual people, the Palestinians in Jordan cannot be categorized as one bloc, in terms of how they identify themselves, i.e., as Jordanian citizens or Palestinian subjects in Jordan with Jordanian citizenship, people who live according to their own preferences. If people have a choice, some would prefer to be totally assimilated into Jordan, while others would like to reside in Jordan as Palestinian nationals. Still others might choose to be relocated to Palestine whenever conditions become appropriate. In the same way, East Bankers also vary in their particular stands on the options for Palestinians. Some extremist, chauvinists adopted an anti-Palestinian stand, often seen waving such slogans as "Jordan for Jordanians." Because the majority of East Bankers prefer to retain their status as the majority-population, many people fear that Jordan might become an alternative homeland for Palestinians. This, they argue, will create such an imbalanced status against them that it has increasingly become a matter of deep concern to Jordanians. Recently, East Bankers see that their identity is at risk, and some believe that the Jordanian identity is being diluted due to the density of the Palestinian population among them. East Bankers depend on the "Jordanization" of the Jordan Arab Army and security services in order to compensate for the demographic imbalance, thereby hoping to ensure the continuation of the Jordanian entity and precedence over all other issues. The Jordanian government's new slogan, "Jordan First," has increased the animosity between Jordanians and Palestinians, reducing the people's sympathy. This is especially true among the East Bankers in Palestine, although the intent is to place Jordan's welfare as the top priority.

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II. INVOLVEMENT AND STRUGGLE FOR PALESTINE

Transjordan and Palestine were administered under the same mandate. They were often treated by the British government as one integrated region, having two banks on the River of Jordan. The Emir's role in Palestine was elevated when the Peel Commission, in 1937, proposed uniting the Arab part of Palestine with Transjordan. This proposal was the first attempt to involve Transjordan as a country in solving the Palestine-Jewish conflict. The Emir's role was further enhanced when Transjordan, along with the Palestinian Higher Arab Committee (HAC) and other Arab countries, participated in the 1939 meeting held in London to discuss the issue.

As the Emir's position was strengthened in the 1930s, he became a significant player in the region, thus encouraging some Palestinian notables who did not accept the political leadership of the Mufti to turn their allegiance to Emir Abdallah.[18] The Palestinian notables believed that the Emir primary reason for appearing when he did was to provide the solution to their political rivalry. These notables were moderates and closely tied to the British administration, Ragheb Nashashibi of Jerusalem being among them. They saw in Abdallah a moderate man who could solve their conflict with the Jews in Palestine. They found out that the British support to Emir would be advantageous to them. Thus, these notables were overjoyed when Emir took them as his allies, developing good friendships with them, and believing they would assist him if he deemed it necessary.

A treaty with the British in March 1946 made Transjordan an independent state – the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In May, the Amir became king. However, the British retained control of the Arab Legion and provided a substantial annual subsidy. Due to the continued British connection, many countries did not recognize the kingdom's independence, and the Soviet Union blocked its admission to the United Nations. The country was admitted to the United Nations in 1954.

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[18] Mufti: An Islamic nickname given to Haj Amin al-Husseini, appointed Grand Muslim Council in 1927.

Abdallah continued to express the Hashemite ambition for creating a greater empire. For example, he dreamed of establishing greater Syria under his rule. As it became clear to him that his dreams were not likely to be achieved, his ambitions went in a new direction, leading him to keep a covetous eye on the Palestine Mandate and the development of events there. Palestine was able to lure Abdallah from his desert kingdom because it had a far richer area, with vastly evergreen farmlands and active trade. Palestine also contained Jerusalem, having the Islamic's first direction and third holiest shrine (after the two Emir's family left in the Hijaz), as well as being the world's religious center.

Abdallah's characteristics and commitment, unquestionably, contributed to Jordan's involvement in Palestine's affairs. However, such qualities, alone, as important as they were, cannot explain entirely a country's foreign policy. It is likely that the Emir also understood the geo-strategic factors and their effect on a small country with scarcity of resources and capabilities such as Jordan.

The mandate made it clear that Jordan would be a part of the independent federation agreed upon in the Hussein-McMahon Correspondences, separate from the Belfour arch. However, it did not exempt Jordan from complying with some of its demands. For example, Jordan was required to help prevent the infiltration of armed groups into Palestine, which served to worsen the Jordanians' relations with both the Palestinians and the Arabs at different times. The king's enduring relations and cooperation with the British saved Jordan from experiencing the same fate as Palestine had. However, Jordan was influenced by the pitfalls and convulsions that resulted from the Arab-Jewish struggle over Palestine.

The mandated political order put both Jordan and Palestine in terms as interrelated "twins," bound by historical relationships between the two peoples. The Hashemite link in the relations between the two banks has evolved around their racial homogeneity. The Hashemites sought to include this unity as part of their federal notion of Arab unity. The Arabs, including the Palestinians, were not opposing the Hashemites over their leanings towards the British, but were opposing them because of British federal plans that had been unfavorable to Arabs seeking power in their countries. The Arabs had also

encountered the French and Jewish plans for the region. The Hashemite link catapulted the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship into the midst of the intense struggle already being waged in the Arab world between the followers of the federal school of thought, on the one hand, and the beneficiaries of the confederacy on the other.[19]

Realizing the dangers evolving in the Zionist-Arab struggle over Palestine, and its probable impacts on both Jordan and Palestine, King Abdallah became convinced that the Zionist, expansionist aspirations could not be halted, as the Arab leaders had claimed. Consequently, he decided to form an interventionist policy toward the Palestinian question. Jordan was obliged to intervene in Palestine's affairs for concerns that were past, present, and future. As far as the present and future were concerned, its security and stability, as well as the people's welfare and economic standards, could not be separated from the present and future of Palestinian history. As to the past, events showed the inseparable linkage between the Jordanians and Palestinians.

Having grasped all the issues pertaining to the Palestinian question, the king saw that the Arabs should make peace with the Jews at the earliest possible opportunity. In doing so, he considered the role of the international community in establishing a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, as well as the empirical fact of the Jews' existence, aside from passion or emotion. If the Arabs had followed suit, they might have been able to dictate their own terms with regard to the Jews, since the Arabs had had an upper hand in the early stages of the conflict.

The king's interventionist strategy in Palestine explained his political vision of the conflict. This strategy was based on three pillars: first, the relations with Palestine had been unique and inseparable in terms of their bearing on the peoples' happiness or despair; second, that the Arabs should not isolate themselves from dealing and cooperating with the British, whose support would be critical and effective for the Arab anti-Zionist strategy; third, that showing a degree of flexibility toward the Jews' plans would serve the Arab cause better than would total rejection or denouncing of Israel's right to exist (something which could not be denied, anyway).

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[19] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship: The Bankruptcy of the Confederal Idea.* London: British Academic Press, 1998, p. 35.

Realizing the British inclination for the partition of Palestine in the late 1930s, the Emir found that his aspirations toward expansion and annexation of new lands would fit in with British plans. Therefore, he worked to build political support with moderate Palestinian families against his strong adversary, Haj Amin, Mufti of Jerusalem.[20] On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted the partition of Palestine, which led to the establishment of an Arab and a Jewish state, whereby Jerusalem was internationalized. Even though the plan was adopted internationally and accepted by the Jews, it was rejected by the Arabs. The Emir and the Palestinian moderate camp were both disappointed by the Palestinian High Arab Committee's position in rejecting the partition plan.[21] They preferred the rejection to the mufti's failure to grasp the realities in Palestine and on the international scene.

As the British mandate in Palestine was approaching its end in 1947, King Abdallah's involvement in Palestine and with its future became more urgent. Whereas the partition plan had paved the road for the expansion of his realm to become a tangible reality, still he felt the danger that others might resist him in taking control in Arab Palestine after the British departure. Consequently, King Abdallah put the incorporation of the Arab part into the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as his first priority. To achieve this goal, he had to seek the support of the three main actors: the British government, the Jewish Agency and the Arab League.

A.   KING ABDALLAH'S DIPLOMACY TOWARD THE THREE MAIN ACTORS

1.   Great Britain

Following the partition plan, the British strategy intended to formulate a system of security alliances separately with each of the important Arab states. Under the new system Egypt, Iraq and Jordan would be recognized as completely independent and sovereign states. Britain saw that its strategic interests would be preserved through the extension of Abdallah's kingdom to include parts of the country.[22]

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[20] Day, *East Bank/West Bank.*

[21] Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom*, p. 29.

[22] Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, p. 130-131.

British intentions converged with King Abdallah's plan, since both sides were at odds with the Mufti, and did not welcome his return to Palestine. The king wanted assurances and commitment from the British, so he dispatched his prime minister, Tawfiq Abul-Huda, to London to meet the British authorities. Abul-Huda referred to the British-Jordanian Treaty, which had settled upon Transjordanian independence the previous year, emphasizing that the two parties could count on the other's support should a threatening situation arise. Abul-Huda declared that upon the British departure from Palestine, a vacuum of power would exist. He believed that the powerful, well-organized Jewish organizations and army would overcome the disorganized, ill-equipped, and poorly trained Palestinians and, thus, would occupy the whole of Palestine without any consideration of the UN partition plan. Eventually, the two sides agreed to send the Arab Legion across the Jordan River. Moreover, Palestinian notables sent a petition to the king requesting his protection from the Jews and Al-Mufti militia upon the British departure.

Soon, Abul-Huda's predictions came true – bloody confrontations between Jews and Palestinians took place, while the Jewish armed organizations, such as Haganah and the Stern gang, perpetrated massacres on some Palestinian villages. The situation in Palestine deteriorated, causing the Palestinians to seek help and rescue from the Arab states.

2.   The Jewish Agency

Due to international developments after World War II, especially the European refusal to accommodate the Jews in their own countries, on one hand, and their sympathy with them, on the other, King Abdallah became more convinced than before that the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was inevitable. His prediction became true when the UN partition plan was issued. Thus, it appeared that any attempts from the Arab states to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state would end in failure. He rationally decided to reconcile Jordanians' and Palestinians' interests with the interests of the Jews, in his merger plan of Arab Palestine. His aspiration was that Jordan would have an outlet to the sea from which he would be an active member of the Mediterranean community. He revealed his plan to the Jewish Agency who, like the British, preferred to deal with King Abdallah, rather than the Mufti. They also opposed the idea of establishing a Palestinian state.

The Palestinians, as confrontation with the Jewish armed organizations continued, became unable to defend their land in 1948, and the refugees started to migrate forcibly from their land. King Adbullah tried to reach an agreement with the Jews by employing his own diplomacy, attempting to bring a peace to the region that would take into account Arab demands. Moreover, he offered the Jews proposals that might constitute the basis for reaching a peaceful settlement. The gist of these proposals can be summed up in the following:[23]

1. Palestine would remain undivided, with autonomy for the areas where Jews predominate;

2. This arrangement would be left for one year, after which time the country would be joined with Transjordan;

3. There would be one parliament in which Jews would be allotted 50% of the seats;

4. There would be a cabinet in which the Jews would be represented (no mention of the percentage).

3.   The Arab League

The Arab League was an obstacle to the king's plan for Palestine. It had chosen Mufti as the representative of the Palestinian people. The Jews refused to deal with him, therefore his nomination to represent the people effectively blocked the channels in which he conflict with the Jews might be solved t before resorting to war. The negative traits of the Mufti often displayed themselves in the Arab League, thereby adversely influencing the collective Arab action toward Palestine.[24]

Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia were against King Abdullah's efforts to annex Arab Palestine as part of his so called dynasty. On the contrary, these countries were supporting Al-Mufti, hoping that he might become the ruler of Arab Palestine. Nevertheless, these countries did not take a stand against the king, fearing that such a

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[23] Adnan Abu Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process.* Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999.

[24] Adnan Abu Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process.* Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999.

stand would make him withdraw from the Arab League. Also, these countries were aware of the strength of the Arab Legion, and would not risk losing it as a professional force if they had to fight a war in Palestine. The Arab League, at that time, was ineffective and unable to adopt a mutually agreed upon policy. At a meeting of the Arab League in October 1947, Jordan was able to pre-empt a proposal made by the anti-Hashemite camp to form a government in Palestine headed by the Mufti.

In a meeting of the political committee of the Arab League on April 10, 1948, the Jordanian delegation emphasized that the king had made his decision to intervene militarily to protect Palestinian interests. Syria and Lebanon called for the formation of an Arab task force to enter and occupy Palestine as soon as the British withdrew, instead of fighting individually. Egypt agreed, but first made a demand that the Arab League announce that Palestinians would be free to choose the form of government they liked. The Egyptian demand was against the king's goal of annexing the Arab part of Palestine. Furthermore, while the committee was in session the king sent a message to the meeting in which he vowed to rescue Palestine. The committee sent a response back to the king thanking him for his offer, and at the same time took the necessary measures to allow the Arab Legion to operate in such a way as to liberate the Arabs in Palestine and prevent any more massacres from taking place. In this case, the king secured the Arab League's political approval to become involved in Palestine, considering this approval to be a victory over the Mufti. The Palestinians, who were suffering brutality at the hands of the

Jewish armed organizations, welcomed the king. The king's position in Palestine strengthened as he shouldered the burden of stopping the Jewish aggression against the Palestinians.

On April 19, 1948, the Arab League made a decision to go to war in Palestine, naming King Abdullah as a general commander of the Arab forces. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, in addition to the Arab Legion, were allocated specific operational duties. The Jewish state escalated their level of aggression toward the Palestinians as the British evacuation approached its deadline of May 15, 1948.

The British withdrawal touched off the conflict, which had been anticipated. There had been, in fact, some fighting for several months between Jews and Palestinians.

On May 15, 1948, on the very day of the British withdrawal, Arab forces joined the war. On the morning of May 15, the Arab Legion, together with a small Iraqi unit, moved across the Jordan valley into the West Bank, occupying most of it. The Legion moved further to Ramleh and Lydda. The Egyptians advanced from the south, and Syrians and Lebanese moved across northern borders.

The Arab Legion was obliged under Jewish pressures to withdraw from Ramleh, Lydda and a strip of land along the western flank of the West Bank, depriving many farmers of their fields, and it remains a point of contention today. Palestinian bitterness against King Abdallah deepened, seeing such withdrawals as concessions to the Jews' expansionist desires. The Arab armies made progress at first, but the truces they accepted gave the Jewish forces the opportunity to organize, strengthen, and retain the initiative. By the end of the was in 1949, Israel had occupied substantially all of Palestine except for the West Bank, held by Jordan, and the Gaza Strip, held by Egypt.[25]

B.   THE KING MOVES TOWARD UNIFICATION OF THE TWO BANKS

Realizing the king's intention to annex the West Bank because it was held and controlled by his troops, in September 1948 the Arab League moved to undermine his efforts. It established an all-Palestinian government in Gaza, headed by the Mufti of Jerusalem, to be the legitimate representation government for all Palestinians. King Abdallah moved quickly to abort this move by organizing a Palestinian Congress of his supporters, held in Amman on October 1. The Congress rejected the Gaza government and petitioned the king to take Arab Palestine under his control and protection.[26]

Two months later, on December 1, 1948, a large gathering of West Bank notables, for the most part friendly to King Abdallah, was held in the West Bank town of Jericho. The conference issued a formal call for the uniting of the West Bank and Jordan. The Jordanian cabinet, in due course, approved this decision.[27] By doing so, the Hashemites were successful in asserting primacy over Palestine, supported by an indigenous

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[25] Sir John Bagot Glubb, *A Soldier with the Arabs.* New York: Harper, 1957.

[26] Abdallah ibn Hussein, *Memoirs of King Abdallah of Transjordan.* London: Oxford University Press, 1950.

[27] Day, *East Bank West Bank.*

Palestinian leadership. The Arab League had no choice but to honor the Palestinians' decision and desire to merge with Jordan. When the winds of this situation finally died down, in April 1950 the Jordanians held elections on both East and West Banks to choose the deputies of the Jordanian lower house of the parliament representing both banks.

The king appointed an upper house of twenty members, seven of whom were Palestinians. The new parliament met and endorsed the union. Jordan had irrevocably become a part of Palestinian politics.[28] At this point, King Abdallah expanded his kingdom to include both East and West Banks of the Jordan River. The old East Bank was overcrowded by a new majority of Palestinians, many of them refugees. Prior to the annexation, Transjordan had a population of little more than 430,000. By 1950, this number was increased a factor of almost three times this number, thereby making the total population of Jordan, after the merger more than 1,280,000, almost two-thirds of whom were Palestinians.[29]

After formation of the first government comprised of a cabinet made up of members from the two banks, King Abdullah openly tried to make a peace treaty with Israel, hoping he would solve two urgent issues at once. The first issue was an attempt to give Jordan an outlet to the Mediterranean Sea, which the second armistice treaty had disregarded. The second issue was to address the refugee problem, either by allowing them to return to their towns (as Lydda and Ramleh refugees) or by having them absorbed and settled in a specified area. The king tried to conclude a comprehensive peace treaty with Israel, thereby intending to enhance the economic situation of a country crowded with refugees and cut off from its traditional trading partners in Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. The only remaining trade partners for the Jordanians were the two banks. The Jordanian government held that if the Israelis opened the borders for trade with the West Bank, the economic situation in the East Bank would flourish.

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[28] Day, *East Bank West Bank*

[29] Avi Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1967*. London: Cass, 1980.

The Jordanian attempts, made by King Abdullah's government, to conclude a peace treaty with Israel were blocked by five obstacles.[30]

1. Israel's rejection of concessions on the return of refugees or an outlet to the Mediterranean.

2. The public resentment, especially by the Palestinians, of any peace with the Israelis.

3. Such resentment and outrage might destabilize the country at the early stages of state building and institutionalization.

4. The Jordanian government, itself, which found itself under heavy pressure from local and Arab nationalists.

5. The Arab masses' mood of anger and bitterness over the defeat in the war that affected their dignity. They considered the unification a new attempt toward efforts for another unified war to retain the lands taken by force. The government slowed down progress toward a peace treaty, and it was finally aborted by the Israeli objection to the Jordanian proposals.

It was apparent that after unification the demographic structure of the kingdom was changed in favor of the Palestinian majority. Most of these people were refugees whose mood posed a challenge, often characterized by frustration, despair, militancy and uncertainty. Thus, the prodigious challenge for the country was to establish security systems, both along the borders with Israel, to avoid any provocation for confrontation, and also internally, to neutralize and suppress any attempts to destabilize the order and rule of law. Some old West Bank institutions were to be dissolved and new ones created to be compatible with the unification requirements, thereby putting the country in modes of transition and integration. Thus, any forms of threats to its stability were unacceptable; on the contrary, they would likely be considered deliberate acts threatening national security.

Another major challenge that Jordan had to confront after unification was how to lessen the differences between the two peoples (having two separate identities) so as to

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[30] Robert Satlof, *From Abdullah to Hussein: Jordan in Transition.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

unite them under a single banner. The two peoples had different views of each other, needing time to accept each other in order to peacefully coexist in only one society. Palestinians saw Jordan as an occupying power, believing that Jordan, like many other Arab states, had failed them.[31] In contrast, Jordanians viewed Palestinians as more sophisticated and modernized. They thought the Arab Legion had gone to Palestine to defend the Palestinians because they had refused to defend themselves.[32] Many Palestinians, and the refugees in particular, fueled by the Arab leaders, blamed the king for their defeat to the Israelis. Accordingly, the refugees held the king responsible for their plight. However, some Palestinians viewed the king as the protector of their homes and towns in the West Bank.

The Palestinian refugees fell into two broad categories. The first category included those who stayed in the West Bank, whether indigenous residents or people who fled their towns and areas taken over by Israel. The second category includes those who migrated to the East Bank, a category whose numbers increased over the years.

The refugees who came under Jordanian rule in 1948 were unhappy with their new circumstances. Many of them resisted absorption into Jordan in an effort to express their right to return to their homeland. Many did not even participate in the parliamentary elections held in Jordan in 1950. Moreover, they wanted to move Jordan toward allying with the Arab nationalist countries, which had opposed Jordan for many years. They were suspect of the Jordanian's ties with the British, accusing Jordan of attempting to make a peace deal with Israel at the expense of Palestinians. Politically, also, these refugees were divided. While some Palestinians were boycotting elections, others were demanding an increase in their representation in the parliament to more accurately reflect that they were the majority population in the country, rather than dividing the seats between the two banks of the river on an equal basis.[33]

King Abdallah had maintained good relations with some leading Palestinian families who did not hesitate to back him when he sought their support in the issue of

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[31] Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom*, p. 57.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Aqil Hayder Abidi, *Jordan: A Political Study, 1948-1967*. New York: Asia Publishing House, 1965.

annexation of Palestine. Members from these families were rewarded with prominent positions in the Jordanian government. Later, king Hussein, the successor of King Abdallah, used this policy of co-optation of some Palestinian elites in order to attain their support and keep the balance in his governments.

There were many dissident groups grown among the Palestinians, representing a formidable opposition to the king's policies. Some political groups were focused on domestic grievances, while others both originated and were supported by forces outside Jordan. However, these groups were kept under the watchful eye of Jordanian security forces. The king was accused of being a traitor to the Arab cause for annexing the West Bank, as well as for shortly thereafter opening up secret negotiations with Israel in a lost effort to obtain access for Jordan to the Mediterranean at Haifa.[34] The king was assassinated on June 21, 1951, while he was entering Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem. He was accompanied, at the time, by his grandson, Hussein, who later became King of Jordan.

Earlier attempts at selecting intermediaries to be involved in assisting the Palestinians to determine their own fate have mostly been subjected to manipulation by others. This weakness was caused by the Palestinians' division over key issues, such as allowing no central authority to direct them, and the lack of unity and cohesion among Palestinian elites. Also, outside regional and global pressures have put many constraints on Palestinian representation. To a great extent, the issue of Palestinian representation has been closely harnessed to the exigencies of Arab politics, often exploited by the confederalists to advance their own interests. This exploitation was either collective, to undermine the Hashemites' plans, or at the nationally individual level, where each country tried to further its own power and hegemony within the Arab arena.[35]

By the time King Abdullah was assassinated, the process of the merger, integration and incorporation of the two banks, measured at different social, political and economic levels, was proceeding relatively smoothly. However, as Palestinians became

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[34] Day, *East Bank West Bank.*

[35] Crown Prince El-Hassan ibn Talal, *Palestinian Self-Determination: A Study of the West Bank and Gaza.* London: Quarters Books, 1981.

more politicized due to their education and civil administration experience, they began to oppose almost all government policies adopted by King Abdullah, whether at the domestic or the international level.

The Jordanian government and its ruling elites managed the crisis resulting from the assassination of King Abdullah followed by the accession of Prince Talal to the throne as the legitimate heir of the Hashemite family. Prince Talal swore the oath as King of Jordan on September 6, 1951. Unlike King Abdullah's patriarchal and dominating approach to governing, King Talal was more liberal in his policies, strongly embracing democratic principles. He even started initiating the process of reforms to suit contemporary developments in the country. King Talal's policies and reforms were met by Palestinians' satisfaction and appreciation. They were given more representation in the parliament. A new constitution was promulgated on January 2, 1952, upon which basic freedoms of speech, press and assembly were ensured. It also gave the parliament the authority to dismiss a cabinet by a two-thirds vote of no confidence. It made the government accountable to the parliament. King Talal had wanted to rule the country in the same way as constitutional monarchies do. He wanted to withdraw from internal politics, preferring to leave them to the Prime Minister and his cabinet. He abandoned the policies of King Abdullah that caused tension and provoked with other Arab countries, like the notion of Great Syria, and the attempt to make a peace deal with Israel. All such sound policies and reforms made it possible for the country to proceed in consolidating unification, only afterward addressing the other issues related to a more stable environment, such as economic, social and political issues.

However, King Talal's health problems that he had before becoming king prevented him from proceeding in his work. He handed over the monarchy rule to his son, Prince Hussein, who took over his constitutional powers on May 2, 1953, at the age of 17.

The Prime Minister, Abul-Huda, who had worked with King Talal until, and after, King Hussein's accession to the throne, seized the opportunity of King Talal's liberal inclination, as well as his illness, to incite the opposition factions on both banks of the River of Jordan. These factions, as time passed, became more powerful and well-

organized. These factions were represented in the parliament by two groups. The first group was the conservatives, who operated in the East Bank. The second group was the liberals, who operated in the West Bank. Both East and West Banks adopted nationalist and revolutionary approaches. The liberals in the West Bank opposed both the government and the king. They were exploited by external nationalist, progressive and revolutionary Arab regimes opposing the Hashemites' policies. By contrast, the conservative opposition was loyal to the monarch, although it, too, often criticized both the government and the king. .

Contrary to pan-Arab opinion, which stated that the Palestinian factor was the main motivator that led Jordan to shift toward democracy, the Hashemites were the pioneers of democracy in the Arab eastern region. King Talal started his democratizational reforms as soon as he took over power. He was highly praised by Western scholars and observers for his way of rule, which was similar to that of Western-style constitutional monarchies. However, it was quite true that Palestinians were well-educated, experienced in civil administration and more politicized due to both their contacts with the West and their long strife for the cause of statehood. Their voice among the Jordanian public's opinion cannot be simply regarded as a majority who opposed the government's policies and its ties with the British, and called for closer ties with pan-Arab states such as Egypt and Syria. The Jordanian pan-Arabists, particularly the Palestinians, were also infatuated with the notions being expounded by President Nasser who, after the Tripartite aggression in Egypt in 1956, they considered to be a national hero who could liberate Palestine. Accordingly, they thought they had found an alternative to the Hashemites, whom they perceived to be adopting pro-British and anti-nationalism stands. However, the anti-Hashemite opposition groups were fostered by Nasser's propaganda, which was launched to destabilize the country, and bring the Hashemites back within the pan-Arab sphere. King Hussein, rather than exploiting narrow state nationalism to accomplish his goals, had based his strategies on the principle of the Great Arab Revolt that called for Arab unity.

As the period from 1959 to 1963 witnessed many changes in the Arab world to include military coups, assassinations of ruling families, as in Iraq, and alliance-making, King Hussein fostered a Jordanian identity to unite the country. However, the pro-

Nasserist Palestinians opposed this new Hashemite policy and considered it a step toward preventing the restoration of Palestine. The Palestinians thought that the call for a Jordanian entity would dilute the Palestinian one that Nasser and pan-Arab nationalists kept calling for, which they thought would weaken the struggle to liberate Palestine. The Palestinians became annoyed, and the government immediately moved to assure the Palestinians of its concern about the Palestinian issue. This concern was well-articulated by the Jordanian Prime Minister, Wasfi Al-Tal, in his white paper, presented to the parliament in 1962:

> Our primary objective of national mobilization both in the military and the civil sectors...is to implement the plan which we view as the most appropriate for restoration of Palestine. For the Palestinian cause to us, is an issue of life or death. The government will present to your August Council the 'Palestine Plan' which aims at shifting our country to the center of power, effectiveness, and mobilization of Arab efforts...in one front that will bring about victory for our cause.[36]

The division in the Arab world reached its climax in 1963 when, in Cairo, the leaders of Egypt, Iraq and Syria concluded a federal agreement that did not work. Jordan would have been isolated if it worked, since this agreement would put Jordan face-to-face with the revolutionary forces. However, Syria and Iraq started talks in July 1963 to form a union, without including Egypt. The unity between these two Baathist regimes would pose a threat that might destabilize Jordan, since the Palestinian intellectuals were mostly Baathists and nationalists. Furthermore, the Iraqi-Syrian unity narrowed the gap between Jordan and Egypt, a step that Jordan benefited from by neutralizing the pro-Nasserist factions internally, as well as by opening the door toward Egyptian-Jordanian rapprochement.

C.   JORDAN'S RAPPROCHEMENT WITH EGYPT

Both Jordan and Egypt saw in the potential Iraqi-Syrian unity a threat to each of them, though from different perspectives. Nasser's image and prestige might be undermined, and Jordanian security concerns would increase. Jordan and Egypt at this stage shared one common interest in avoiding a confrontation with Israel that the pan-

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[36] Hazem Nusseibeh, Tarikh al-Urdun al-Siyasi al-Mu'asir, *Contemporary Political History of Jordan, 1952-67*, Volume 2. Amman: Committee of Jordan History, 1990, p. 106.

Arab nationalists favored. Because both countries realized that they could effectively do nothing to restore the Palestinian rights, at a time when Israeli military superiority prevailed, the issue served as a catalyst for warming up Egyptian-Jordanian relations in the mid-1960s.

Furthermore, the Israeli plans to divert the Jordan River water resources (in addition to the Syrian counterplan to control Jordan water resources in the Syrian territories) forced both Jordan and Egypt to work closely together to address such developments. Due to Israel's overwhelming military supremacy, Nasser became convinced of the need to change the current Arab policy. The new policy would be centered on Arab joint action, and refrain from escalating tensions with Israel. All actions and steps toward Israel should be carefully calculated and estimated. Consequently, President Nasser called for an Arab Summit to be held in Cairo to discuss the general Arab situation, as well as the current Israeli plans for diversion of the Jordan River's water. In January 1964, kings and presidents of the Arab states gathered in Cairo for the first Arab Summit Conference. The Arab "Cold War," thus, was suspended, and apparently cordial relations were re-established within the space of a few hours.[37]

The Arab Summit provided a unique opportunity for King Hussein to exploit his newly-improved relations with President Nasser. Even before the Summit, the king paid many visits to Cairo, where he demonstrated respect to revolutionary regimes, as well as recognition of the Yemen Republic (which had gained Nasser's adulation). Moreover, King Hussein highly valued the role that Egypt could play in leading the inter-Arab relations. Eventually, the king did not object to the Cairo Summit's, which had been orchestrated under the chairmanship of Nasser, decisions to create the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and to arm the Palestinian Liberation Army, despite the security threats that might arise in the West Bank. King Hussein also accepted the establishment of the Unified Arab Military Command under an Egyptian general. The Summit opened the door for the Palestinians to have a representative at the Arab League

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[37] Malcom H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958-1970.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 98.

to keep in contact with the member states in the Arab League and with the Palestinians. Its goal was to coordinate among fellow Arabs the means and different methods towards the liberation of Palestine.

The Jordanian-Egyptian warm relations and rapprochement soon ended, in 1965, after King Hussein cracked down on the PLO, closing down its offices in Jordan. Another reason for the break in relations was the pressure put on Cairo by the left-oriented Baathist regime in Damascus.[38] However, while the peace lasted, it also served to achieve two closely-related objectives: the prevention of an all-out Arab-Israeli war, and the conciliation of the King's Palestinian subjects, many of whom had now languished for the better part of a generation as homeless refugees.[39]

Hussein's adoption of a new strategy toward the alignment with the Arabs in 1964-1965, even at the expense of Jordan's security and stability, spotlighted his quest to gain the acceptance of his rule among the Arab nationalists, particularly the radicals. Such a quest would further enhance his domestic legitimacy. By doing so, and unlike his father, who had different regional ambitions and a different vision of pan-Arabism, Hussein's main focus turned toward the maintenance of Jordan sovereignty through ensuring his regime's security. Such a notion led later to the Jordanization of the country under different domestic, regional, and international circumstances.

D.   THE FIRST ARAB SUMMIT OPENS THE ROAD TO THE EMERGENCE OF NATIONAL PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP

Previously, on September 22, 1948, the Arab League tried to establish an all-Palestinian government to be operated from Gaza (under pressure from Egypt). The Mufti was elected President, and Ahmad Hilmi, a Palestinian political figure, was appointed Prime Minister by the Palestinian National Congress. The objective behind the establishment of this government was to undermine the Emir Abdallah's attempts to annex the West Bank to his dynasty, as the news leaked of his maneuvers with the British and loyal Palestinian friends to accommodate his desire. The Emir believed that the annexation of the West Bank would be a viable solution to the economic difficulties

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[38] Kerr, p. 114-115.

[39] Tariq Tell (ed.), *The Resilience of the Hashemite Rule: Politics and the State in Jordan, 1946-67.* Amman: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain (CERMOC), 2001.

confronting both West and East Banks. Furthermore, he fought the 1948 war, thereby saving the West Bank from Israeli expansion, intending to annex the West Bank to his rule. The Emir moved rapidly to counter the establishment of a Palestinian government headed by his opponent, Al-Mufti. He also gained the unanimity of the Palestinian people, through conferences held both in Amman and Jericho in October and December 1948, respectively, to unite the West Bank with the East Bank.

The declaration of establishing a Palestinian government in Gaza on October 1, 1948, though destined to die at birth, along with the existence of a Palestinian Congress at that time, refused to fade away. It remained active toward keeping the Palestinian cause, in coordination with the Arab states, as the central issue for all Arabs and Muslims. However, the Palestinians have suffered throughout history from a lack of a national body to represent them. At this time, the Palestinian elites were divided by their difference of ideology, as well as by political tides, such as communism, Baathism, nationalism, progressivism, and various Muslim movements. Some, however, were loyal to certain regimes, like the Nasserists and the Hashemites. The absence of a unified leadership kept their entity in a situation of flux between different allegiances.

The first step taken to strengthen the Palestinian entity was taken in December 1945, when the Arab League Council adopted a resolution in which it decided that Palestinians may be represented by one or more representatives to participate in all the proceedings of the council in accordance with that provided for by Charter of the Arab League, though such representation was not to exceed three.[40] The second step was taken when the same council decided to set up a Palestinian committee, given the name al-Ha'ia al-Arabiya al-Ulia (The High Arab Committee – HAC), to represent the Palestinians in the Arab League. At this time, in 1963, the Arab League appointed Ahmad Al-Shuqairi as the Palestinian representative to the Arab League, succeeding Ahmad Hilmipasha, the old representative who had passed away three months previously.[41] Nasser's lobbying, along with pressure being exerted by the Arab League, was behind this appointment--Al-Shuqairi was known for his anti-Hashemite policies,

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[40] Arab League Resolution 17, Second Ordinary Session, 12th Meeting, December 4, 1945.

[41] Arab League Resolution 1909, 40th Ordinary Session, Second Meeting, September 19, 1963.

especially the unity of the West Bank with the East Bank of Jordan. By doing so, Nasser continued the Egyptian attempts to revive and fuel the concept of the Palestinian entity which would become independent from the Hashemites' containment and domination.

Al-Shuqairi, a lawyer and politician, had experienced international affairs through his work as a Saudi representative to the United Nations. He became more knowledgeable in diplomatic affairs. His main concerns were the independence of Palestinian decision-making and the formulation of a Palestinian entity. He tried to establish a Palestinian government that would operate independently of the Hashemites and the Arab League, as well as working to establish a Palestinian National Congress. The Jordanian government rejected his plans and informed the Arabs through its consistent stand that Palestinians would be free to decide their destiny and future after the liberation of Palestine. The Jordanian-Egyptian mutual conflict over the Palestinian entity made Egypt more energetic toward working to establish a Palestinian representative organization. Eventually, the first National Palestinian Congress convened in Jerusalem in May 1964, announcing the establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). This step was blessed by the second Arab Summit held in Alexandria, Egypt, in September 1964. Now the Palestinian entity could begin, though it needed time to mature, depending upon the new leadership's (i.e., PLO) relation with the Arabs to make their issue the center of the Arab political struggle.

The new entity needed to mobilize the Palestinian people around their national cause, currently dispersed in different areas of the region. After the 1948 war, a large number of Palestinians migrated to Jordan and became Jordanian citizens. Even though most West Bankers remained in the West Bank, a number of Palestinians remained in their villages under Jewish occupation, and the people of Gaza under Egyptian rule stayed there without a state while some went to Syria and Lebanon. Now Palestinians, after the establishment of the PLO, had two competing representatives: the Jordanian government and the PLO.

E.   COMPETING REPRESENTATIVES: THE PLO AND JORDAN

Jordan wanted to represent the Palestinians, the Jordanian regime rejecting any Palestinian body's attempts to represent Palestinians. For example, Jordan rejected the

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General Palestine Government, set up in Gaza in 1948 through Egyptian manipulation, and the Higher Palestine Organization, based in Cairo and Damascus, which was presided over by Haj Amin Al-Husayni. However, Jordan did not object to the Arab decision regarding the establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1964, since the PLO did not claim to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and made no claims of sovereignty over the West Bank. Therefore, the apparent position of the PLO, at the time, did not oppose the Jordanian claims on both.[42] Moreover, the PLO's Palestinian National Charter mentioned that "this organization does not exercise any regional sovereignty over the West Bank in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan or the Gaza Strip or the Himma area."[43] The PLO head at the time, Ahmad Al-Shuqairi declared, at a press conference in Cairo, that the new organization would cooperate with the Jordanian government, and that this cooperation would have "a special charter because the majority of the Palestinian people live in Jordan."[44]

Responding to these commitments, in his letter of designation of the new Prime Minister, Wasfi Al-Tall, on February 13, 1965, King Hussein wrote that one main task of the new government toward the Palestinian cause would be:

> ...rendering support to the Palestine Liberation Organization at national and international levels. This position is based on our faith that as long as our brothers, Palestine's children, in Jordan and outside, choose the organization as a way to mobilize and organize efforts of the Palestinian people, we shall stand by the organization, support it and back up its effort until Palestinian people and Arab nations reinstate Arab rights in Palestine.[45]

He also stressed that the new PLO must not harm the unity of the Jordanian nation.

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[42] Yazid Sayigh, *Al-Urdun wa Al-Filastiniyun, Dirash Fi wihdat Al-Masir Aw Al-sira Al-Hatmi*. London: Riad El-Rayyes Press, 1987, p. 22-25.

[43] Article 24 of the Palestinian National Charter, *Al-Mithaq Al-Qawmi Al-Filastini*, reproduced in Faysal Hurani, *Al-Fikr Al-Siyasi Al-Filastini, 1964-1974: Dirasah Lil-Mawathiq Al-Ra'isiyyah Li-Munazzamat Al-Tahrir Al-Filastiniyyah*. Beirut: Markaz Al-Abhath, Munazamat Al-Tahrir Al-Filastinyyah, 1979.

[44] Suleiman Musa, *History of Jordan in the Twentieth Century: 1958-1995*. Amman: Al-Muhtaseb Press, 1995.

[45] Suleiman Musa, *History of Jordan in the Twentieth Century: 1958-1995*. Amman: Al-Muhtaseb Press, 1995.

King Hussein appointed Wasfi Al-Tal as Prime Minister, for several reasons. First and most importantly, were his accumulated experiences of the Palestinian issue acquired through both his drafting of the Al-Tal White Paper, and his dealings with the Palestinians gained from his involvement in the Arab Rescue Army in 1948. Second, Al-Tal was a solid and loyal Jordanian patriot who had run the Jordanian information and publicity system during the prime ministry of Hazza' al-Majali in 1959. He, along with al-Majali, had adopted the defensive Jordanian strategy at that time. Third, the king thought that after the death of al-Majali, Al-Tal was the right person to stand in the face of Nasser and could mobilize all Jordanians behind him in defending the Jordanian identity and independence as part of Jordanian nationalism.

Al-Tal chose a Palestinian intellectual, Hazem Nusseibeh, to run the ministry of foreign affairs. He was also the co-drafter of the Al-Tal White Paper. This period coincided with the Jordanian-PLO conflict in relations, necessitating that a Jordanian minister of Palestinian origin act diplomatically in his dealings with Arabs and foreign diplomats. Realizing the demographic structure of Jordan, with its large number of Palestinians, Al-Shuqairi, in 1965, tried to make Jordan his staging base, from which he and his staff and the PLA could operate. He did not intend to make the West Bank his headquarters of operations, fearing Israeli attacks.

Two weeks after the appointment of Al-Tal, Al-Shuqairi visited Amman from Cairo, demanding the formation of a military force under PLO control, the deduction of five percent of the wages of Palestinian employees as taxes for the PLO, compulsory military service, and fortification of frontier villages. The Jordanian government rejected all of these demands as being undue encroachments on Jordanian sovereignty and internal affairs.

In a press conference in Amman, attempting to reflect Palestinian feelings toward the Jordanian position on the establishment of the PLO and its pledge for support (declared by the king's letter of designation of Al-Tal to the Cabinet), , Al-Shuqairi declared his choice of Transjordanians, like Najib Rushaydat, for membership in the

PLO's Executive Committee. He also declared that Jordan was the home of the PLO, that the East Bank was torn from Palestine in 1919, and that the East Bank was fundamentally one with the motherland.[46]

It is useful to contrast the nature of Palestinian leadership with that of Jordan, both before and after the establishment of the PLO. The leadership figures in the West Bank before 1964 were considered community leaders who served as intermediaries between the people and the central government in managing community affairs. The political opposition leaders did not rise to the level of national leaders, since they neither represented, nor claimed to represent Palestinians. Palestinians had realized that they were citizens of a kingdom whose king, in most cases, was considered the only national leader. Moreover, West Bank leaders and people became more convinced, after many years of unification with the East Bank, that separation from Jordan would not protect them from Israeli expansionism. It would also not help them establish a viable and independent entity, politically or economically, since there was no solution to their issues. By the time the PLO was established, the Palestinians in the West Bank had become fully assimilated and integrated within the Jordanian entity.

The new Palestinian leadership, represented by the PLO, and empowered by the Arab Summit resolution, began to deal with Jordan, as an independent organization representing the Palestinian people. The PLO Charter stated that its main goal was centered on strengthening the Palestinian entity by building up the popular Palestinian base. The PLO started to place demands on Jordan which Jordan could not tolerate. The deterioration in relations between Jordan and the PLO started a short time after the PLO demands and declarations, especially the demands that Jordan institute a compulsory military service. King Hussein responded in an aired speech by saying:

> We shall not discriminate between the eastern Jordanian and the western Jordanian, and no one will be able to tear this unity asunder and take the brother away from his brother, and take the soldier away from his unit, and much of what we have recently heard and continue to hear…is only

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[46] *Al-Kitab Al-Sanawi Lil-Qadiyyah Al-Filastiniyyah Li-'Am 1964.* Beirut: Mussassat Al-Dirasat Al-Filastinyyah, 1960, p. 10-11.

meant to break apart the one structure, and to tear apart the one entity, which we shall not allow under any circumstances.[47]

King Hussein wrote a letter to President Nasser in which the king accused the PLO leader, Ahmad Al-Shuqairi, of trying to tear the bonds of the Palestinians' and Jordanians' brotherhood in the west and east of the River Jordan. In addition to his attempts to stir up hidden rancor and discord, he tried to break up the unity of the people and army. On his visit to the city of Ajlun in northern Jordan in 1966, at the moment the Arab armies entered Palestine, King Hussein declared that the Palestinian issue ceased to have a Palestinian character. He also said that the people of Jordan, both Jordanians and Palestinians, had a strong belief that the unity of both banks was blessed by God, that it was backed up by the people, and that it was considered the nucleus of the larger Arab unity. He also threatened to cut off every hand that harmed the unity or the country, and that Jordan would not tolerate any further provocations.[48]

Through this warning, the king, not only meant to convey a message to Al-Shuqairi, but also to the Fatah movement, headed by Yasser Arafat. During the period from 1965 to 1967, the Palestinian liberation movement, Fatah, was operating inside Jordanian territory and carried out a number of attacks on Israel from within Jordanian borders. In retaliation for these attacks, Israel attacked the villages on the border between the two countries. The Jordanian government tried to prevent such provocative attacks by Fatah through the use of force. The situation escalated the tension between Jordan and the PLO, especially after an Israeli attack on the West Bank village of Summou on November 13, 1966, which was followed by a massive Palestinian demonstration in the West Bank against Jordan for its ineptitude in protecting the people.

In addition to his old demands on Jordan, Al-Shuqairi brought new ones – he said he wanted Jordan to deal with the PLO officials and the Executive Committee members as diplomats, having diplomatic immunity. Furthermore, he suggested that Jordanian

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[47] Khamsah wa' Ishrun 'Am min Al-Tarik, 1952-1977, Majmu'at Khutub jalalat Al-Malik Al-Husayn Bin Talal Al-Muzazzam, Malik Al-Mamlakah Al-Urduniyyah Al-Hashimiyyah. London, Amman: Samir Mutawi' Lil-Nashr, 1978, Volumes I, II, III.

[48] Khamsah wa' Ishrun 'Am min Al-Tarik, 1952-1977, Majmu'at Khutub jalalat Al-Malik Al-Husayn Bin Talal Al-Muzazzam, Malik Al-Mamlakah Al-Urduniyyah Al-Hashimiyyah. London, Amman: Samir Mutawi' Lil-Nashr, 1978, Volumes I, II, III.

radio be used to broadcast Palestinian nationalist programs. Jordan, as before, rejected his demands, upon which he began his propaganda campaign against Jordan and King Hussein. The Jordanian government began taking the necessary measures to prevent the penetration of the PLO into Jordanian society.

By 1965, inter-Arab relations had entered a new state of tension when the two allies of the United States, namely Saudi Arabia and Iran, called for an Islamic conference. The Saudi monarch, King Faisal, visited Jordan to get its support by joining the conference, Jordan giving its approval. Egypt, a Soviet Union ally, accused these countries of implementing the United States policy of resisting communism. A military coup took place in Syria, also at this time (i.e., in February 1966), where a more militant Baathist regime took power. This regime supported the Fatah, since both shared almost the same ideology, calling for a popular liberation war.

Syria allowed Fatah factions to infiltrate Jordanian territories to attack Israel. The Jordanian regime believed that the main reason for this was to create a state of instability on the Jordanian-Israeli front, thereby embarrassing the Jordanian government in front of its own population. This was especially true, since Israel usually responded to such provocative attacks by striking the border villages, triggering adverse public reactions in the West Bank.

All of these developments contributed to the division of the Arabs into two camps. The first was the revolutionary camp, which included Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Algeria and the PLO. The second camp was the conservative states, which included Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Morocco. The PLO alignment with the revolutionary camp gave it more strength and momentum to oppose Jordan.[49] Al-Shuqairi's policies against Jordan included his support of Jordanian political opposition activists. On many occasions, He called on the government to release the arrested activists and grant amnesty to those outside the country. Due to PLO manipulation, the Jordanian representation in the Palestine National Congress (NPC) was reduced, losing its majority by the time the third NPC was held in May, 1966.

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[49] Suleiman Musa, *History of Jordan in the Twentieth Century.*

At this stage, the PLO began to pose itself as a representative of the Palestinian people and recognized by Arab states. The king delivered a speech on June 14, 1966, where he addressed all issues pertaining to Palestine, the PLO, and national security red lines. The king accused the revolutionary camp of being puppets in the hands of the communists. The Jordanian government made the decision on July 14, 1966 to stop cooperation with the PLO that did not reflect its own character. However, Fatah continued to look for a way to use Jordan as a safe haven and base of operations, since many Palestinians lived there, and also because of its long border with Israel from which it could use many avenues of infiltration.

Inter-Arab relations and division over many issues prior to the war in 1967 show that the Arab situation was not solid. Each country had its concerns and worries. They were not ready to win a war against the militarily superior Israel. Whereas Nasser and King Hussein both tried their best to avoid a military confrontation with Israel, the Palestinian Fatah and the Baathist regime in Syria pursued the slogan of liberation of Palestine at any cost. The prevailing Arab situation in the period that preceded the 1967 war was not promising, since there was no space left for further conciliation or solidarity.

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III. A NEW UNEXPECTED ERA OF CHANGE: 1967

Jordan's relations with Egypt, Syria and the PLO during the years 1966-1967 were characterized by tension and differences in views, policies, and alliances. However, Jordan was forced in the 1950s and 1960s to conform, at least in public, to the pan-Arab consensus. This was the era coinciding with the domination of Arab politics by the charismatic figure of Gamal Abdel Nasser, and with the youthful and untested leadership of King Hussein. For some years, however, the main concern for Arab nationalism or Nasserism was to confront Western imperialism by inciting both political and social revolution to overthrow traditional conservative Arab regimes. The Arab nationalist activists and leaders believed that Arab unity would be attained, and Palestine restored, only after abolishing these regimes.

King Hussein adopted a survival strategy through a combination of concessions to Arabs' demands and conformity. This was coupled with steps taken to persuade the Arab nationalists adopt his policies, and leaning toward the West. Consequently, he abandoned the idea of joining the Baghdad Pact, accepted Arab financial support to compensate for the loss of British financing, dismissed the British commanding officers from the Arab Legion and "Arabized" the Arab Legion's command. Even though he took such steps to satisfy the Arab nationalists' desires, he was subjected to a military coup by a pro-Nasser military officers' movement, resulting in his dismissal of the radical Arab nationalist prime minister, Sulayman Nabulsi.[50]

It is true that the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization by the first Arab Summit in 1964 was considered a blow to Jordan's sovereignty over Palestine over the long term. However, it did not challenge Jordan immediately, since Nasser, who had no intention of confronting Israel, controlled it. Nevertheless, regardless of Nasser's support of the PLO, the king did not hesitate to defy the PLO and close down its offices when they differed over the representation of Palestinians in Jordan.[51]

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[50] Aruri, *Jordan.*

[51] Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians & The Hashemite Kingdom.*

The general Arab situation prior to the 1967 war was characterized by escalating rivalry, tension and mistrust. Egypt and the Ba'ath regime in Syria were at odds. Jordan and the PLO were competing over Palestinian representation. The Iraqis fell close to the Egyptians. The Saudis were against Egypt over the Yemen issue. On the other side of the equation, Israel initiated a number of provocations on the Syrian and Jordanian borders. It also tried to divert the water of the River Jordan, after its air strike on a water-diversion construction site in Syrian territory on July 6, 1966. The deterioration in the situation between the Arabs and the Israelis in 1966 moved Egypt closer to Syria against Israel, although it had no intentions of attacking Israel.

In 1967, the Arabs reached a consensus to confront Israel militarily, with the expectation that a short, inconclusive war would benefit the Arabs politically, even if they lost on the battlefield. King Hussein felt he could not stay on the sidelines alone. The Israeli border raids on the West Bank aroused public opinion domestically, which made it impossible for the king to remain uncommitted to the Arab consensus. Consequently, the king made the decision to join the Arab consensus, placing his army under Egyptian command, in accordance with the Egyptian-Jordanian pact signed a matter of days before the war started.

Another Arab pact was signed on June 4, 1967 between Egypt and Iraq. However, the Arab defense pacts were quick and immature, taking place at the last minute, in an attempt at a quick reconciliation of the deep political differences prevailing among Arabs before the war.

Jordan joined the Arab consensus to stand in the face of Israel's military, and Jordanian forces entered the 1967 war under the command of an Egyptian commander, General Abdel Munim Riyadh, commander of the Arab Eastern Front. President Nasser applauded the king on the courageous step by saying, "When history is written, your courage and bravery will be cited, and so will be the courage of the Jordanian people who joined this battle without hesitation."[52]

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[52] *Al-wathaiq al-Urduniya (Jordanian Documents)*. Amman: Press and Publication Department, 1967, p. 54.

The 1967 war culminated in the abrupt defeat of Arab forces and the loss of Arab lands. Jordan lost all the West Bank territories it had obtained in 1948. Syria's defeat and loss of the strategic Golan Heights discredited the Ba'ath regime, contributing to its overthrow in 1970 by another Ba'athist, Hafez al-Assad. After losing Sinai and the war, Nasser lost his prestige among the Arab public, and his role was never the same again. The role of the Arab oil-rich countries in the Arabian Peninsula became more influential in supporting the front-line states' weak economies and their reformation projects.

After the 1967 war, Jordan faced many challenges emerging from the economic and political crisis caused by the loss of the West Bank and Jerusalem. The defeat of the Arab armies in the 1967 war shocked and frustrated Palestinians, who had thought for a long time that their land would be restored by their Arab brethren. The Jordanian bargaining and justifications over the Palestinian issue was weakened because of the loss of the West Bank and its people.[53]

The greatest and unexpected result of the war was that Arabs' attitudes toward Israel changed, namely that Israel was to be viewed as an existing reality to live and deal with, rather than as an alien body to be rejected.[54] Large numbers of Palestinians became refugees and displaced people who migrated to the neighboring Arab countries. Jordan, once again, received the largest portion of them, which increased the number of Palestinians in Jordan to become a majority. Palestinians were forced to live under worse conditions in a country whose economy was shattered and unable to accommodate the unexpected waves of refugees.

After the 1967 war, the Arab leaders, especially King Hussein and Nasser, tried to find excuses for their defeat. Nasser, in a telephone call to King Hussein, accused the USA and Britain of providing support to Israel, the king supporting this statement. The people in the Arab streets also believed that such accusations were true. Although Nasser tried to resign, the people wanted him to remain.

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[53] Shemesh Moshe, *The Palestinian Entity, 1959-74: Arab Politics and the PLO*. London: Cass, 1988, p. 33.

[54] Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians & The Hashemite Kingdom*, p. 134.

There were two main factors that contributed to the survival of the Jordanian kingdom during this period of defeat. The first was the Jordanian commitment to the Arab consensus to confront Israel....The second was the king's warning to the Arabs not to let their strong emotions cloud their perception of Israel's power.

Gradually the people absorbed the shock of defeat, at the same time vowing to take revenge on Israel. Jordanian-Palestinian relations reached a high level of tension due to the Palestinians' accusations that the Jordanian army had not fought hard enough in the war, and that Jordan had conspired with Israel to defeat Nasser. Nevertheless, Jordan continued to represent the Palestinians who, at the same time, moved to the East Bank after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, believing that it was also part of their country. However, they continued to be dealt with there as refugees or displaced people.[55]

A.   JORDAN'S PRIORITIES AFTER THE 1967 WAR

The 1967 war resulted in acute economic difficulties, since the occupation of the West Bank led to the loss of almost 38 percent of Jordan's GDP.[56] Although the GDP had previously been expressed mostly in "hard" currency (e.g., through tourism revenues from Jerusalem and Bethlehem, as well as the exchange of trade and businesses between the two banks of the Jordan River), this expression was halted after the war. At the domestic level, Jordan's main concern was the recovery of its economic situation and the rebuilding of its armed forces that were destroyed during the war. King Hussein sought support from the Gulf states, which contributed a total of $60 million following the king's speech on June 7, 1967 in which he urged the Arab brethren to support the Jordanian forces with material or moral assistance.[57] Also, the large numbers of refugees and displaced people moving to Jordan constituted a heavy economic burden on a country of limited resources. Jordan was forced to deal with this situation until further outside support was secured.

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[55] Displaced people are defined as refugees from the 1967 war.

[56] Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians & The Hashemitete Kingdom*, p. 137.

[57] *Al-wathaiq al-Urduniya (Jordanian Documents)*, p. 58.

Jordan thought that the occupation would not last long, so its policies were centered on the unity of the two banks. Thus, it kept the bridges between the two banks of the Jordan River open. Also, the refugees and the displaced thought their stay in Jordan was temporary and that they would return home soon. The PLO leaders were looking for the separation of the West Bank from Jordan, once liberated. In contrast, the Jordanian government's position toward the West Bank was incongruent with that of the PLO's position, which affirmed that the destiny of Palestine should be determined by the Palestinian people. The king moved outside Jordan to seek Western countries' support to restore the West Bank, especially the United States, whose role would be very effective if a resolution to the conflict was ever to be adopted. He met with President Johnson in late June, after addressing the UN, where the king offered peace to Israel if it would withdraw from the West Bank. However, President Johnson left this option open for direct negotiation with Israel, an option that Jordan was dissatisfied with.[58]

The PLO-Jordanian conflict over Palestinian representation appeared again three months after the 1967 war, during the Al-Khartoum Arab Summit on August 29, 1967. Al-Shuqairi, the PLO leader, thinking that the Israeli occupation would not last long, requested that Palestine be given the right of self-determination, and not to return to Jordanian rule. He continued to claim that the PLO was the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.[59] However, the PLO failed to secure Arab approval on this issue. The king instead, took a moderate move toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, realizing (through his state visits to Western countries) that Israel existence was a reality that had to be accepted. He was rational in his approach, trying to convince the Arab leaders during the Al-Khartoum summit to exert all efforts, including diplomatic ones, in an endeavor to secure the restoration the West Bank Arab lands.[60] The king obtained Nasser's support of his approach when Nasser declared at the summit that, "the only open avenue" before them was the political one. In this context, it was necessary that King Hussein deal with the Americans in order to regain the West Bank, since the United

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[58] Suleiman Musa, *Tarikh al-Urdun fi al-Qarn al-Ishrin, 1958-95 (Jordan History in the Twentieth Century)*, vol.2. Amman: Maktabat al-Muhtaseb, 1996.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

States was the only country that could exert enough pressure on Israel to cause them to abandon the West Bank. The Arab Summit at Khartoum, on September 1, 1967, gave the king the freedom, with Nasser's support, to seek a diplomatic solution to this issue, which also reinstated Jordan as the sole representative of Palestinians, against the PLO claim.[61]

The king, through his state visits to Moscow and Western countries, developed an approach that acknowledged the reality of Israel's existence in the region, in line with the international community and world public opinion. This created a division in the Arab world between those who adopted this moderate approach and those of the opponents and more hard-line countries, including the PLO. This polarization was reflected in UN Security Council Resolution 242, which was accepted by both Jordan and Egypt, but rejected by Syria and the Palestinians (because it was vague and dealt with Palestinians only as refugees). However, Resolution 242 became a sort of "bible" for the Middle East political process. Other Arab countries realized how viable this resolution was to in helping them achieve most of their desired rights, urging both Syria and the Palestinians to change their attitudes toward it and accept it as the best available international formula for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. The UN Secretary designated Gunnar Jarring as his special envoy to work with the concerned states toward reaching a peaceful settlement to this issue. Jarring's efforts were hindered by both the Palestinian fedayeen movement and direct opposition.

B.   JORDAN'S CIVIL WAR: 1970-71

As the fedayeen and Palestinian guerrilla bases spread out along the eastern bank of the Jordan River immediately after the Six-Day War in 1967, the fedayeen infiltration and attacks against Israel invited Israeli reprisals and retaliations on villages and populated areas, Israel failing to distinguish between fedayeen and civilians. Many peasants and farmers in the Jordan Valley deserted their farmlands and villages to seek shelter and safe haven from such attacks, which aroused the government's and people's outrage against both Israel and the Palestinian guerrillas.

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[61] Suleiman Musa, *Tarikh al-Urdunfi al-Qarn al-Ishrin, 1958-95 (Jordan History in the Twentieth Century)*, vol.2. Amman: Maktabat al-Muhtaseb, 1996.

The people raised concerns about their security and means of earning a living, since they came under repeated Israeli attacks. The Jordanian government tried to prevent the fedayeen from acting on their own. The Jordanian government decided to maintain the security of Jordan and to impose the rule of law.[62] However, the fedayeen infiltration into the West Bank to attack Israel continued. The Israelis decided to put an end to such attacks by uprooting the fedayeen bases in the Jordan Valley. In March 1968, Jordanian Army intelligence gathered information about an imminent Israeli attack on the East Bank. Jordanian intelligence warned the fedayeen to evacuate their bases.

On March 21, 1968, Israeli forces waged an attack on the Al-Karameh sector in the Jordan Valley. The Jordanian Army engaged the Israeli attacking force, using all arms available in a fierce 15-hour battle. The battle ended with the defeat and withdrawal of the Israeli forces, leaving behind many losses and a number of serviceable tanks and armored vehicles that were then displayed in the Jordanian Capital Square.

The fedayeen bases in Al-Karameh were destroyed by the Israeli air and ground forces attacks. Nevertheless, the fedayeen, encouraged by the Jordanian Army infantrymen, fought well, as the Jordanian artillery and armor provided support. Had the Jordanian Army not engaged the Israelis by use of its armor, anti-armor and artillery, the fedayeen, with their small arms and machine guns, would have been easily defeated by the attackers.

Al-Kamareh was the first Arab battle fought with Israel since the Six-Day War in 1967. The battle restored Arab dignity on one hand, and raised and maintained both the morale and self-confidence of the Jordanian Army and the fedayeen. Al-Karameh Day has become a national day where Jordanians commemorate the heroism and sacrifices of the Jordanian Army in combating and defeating the Israeli Army. However, the PLO tried to record the victory in Al-Karameh as being due to its own contribution. The PLO, backed by Palestinians and other Arab nationalist states, was able to publicize and magnify its role in the Al-Karameh battle. Accordingly, the PLO gained more recognition, credibility and publicity. Thus, immediately after the physical battle, the

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[62] *Al-wathaiq al-Urduniya (Jordanian Documents)*, p. 235.

Jordanian government and the PLO were involved in psychological warfare and a propaganda battle over who actually defeated the Israelis.

At this time, Al-Fatah's leadership decided that it was necessary to emerge from underground and present itself to the world. On April 16, 1968, in Damascus, Yassir Arafat was chosen its official spokesman and its representative for all official questions of organizations, finance and information.[63] The Al-Fatah's leadership was able to secure financial support from Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Qatar and other Gulf states where Palestinians worked and earned money. Arafat and his group were able to evict Al-Shuqair from PLO leadership through the approval of the Palestine National Congress held in Cairo in July 1968.[64]

On November 4, 1968, due to guerrilla provocation, kidnapping and harassment of civilian and military people, the Jordanian Army exchanged fire with the guerrillas and shelled their bases in the refugee camps of Wahdat, Jebel Hussein and Schneller, which led the guerrillas to fight back.[65] Arafat disclosed to one of his aides: "We had no choice but to reach a modus vivendi. We had to protect ourselves in order to survive as a movement."[66]

In 1969, Arafat's group was able to take control of the main official PLO apparatus and establish a sort of joint PLO-Fatah military command, which in one form or another survived a number of trials, including the Jordanian Civil War in September 1970.

As Al-Fatah spread out in Jordan, mainly among Palestinian camps and urban communities, it started establishing an infrastructure of clinics, orphanages, schools and training centers in the refugee camps. It reflected a state within a state, that alarming King Hussein. The guerrilla authority existed in parallel with the royal power, thus starting a conflict over power and control of the country, focused mainly on the capital

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[63] John K. Cooley, *Green March, Black September: The Story of the Palestinian Arabs*. London, Frank Cass, 1973.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Suleiman Musa, *Tarikh al-Urdunfi al-Qarn al-Ishrin, 1958-95*.

[66] Ibid.

and main cities of Jordan. There were many cases of "shakedowns," where merchants and ordinary citizens were forced to give money, both to real and fake commandos.[67] Many unarmed soldiers were kidnapped and tortured on their way to either their units or homes during leave.

The situation in Jordan became intolerable due to undisciplined guerrilla actions and negative attitudes toward the Jordanian citizens and army.[68] Paradoxically, the Al-Fatah crisis with Jordan coincided with the time that it reached its highest effectiveness against Israel. It had conducted many successful attacks in 1969 and early 1970 against Israel, including attacks on Israel to sabotage its oil installations, and other sites of economic significance.

Arafat had to resist the political challenge to the guerrilla movement represented by the Rogers peace plan, warning Arab leaders not to accept it. However, Egypt, being exposed to Israeli attacks since July 1969, accepted the plan, making a public statement on June 24, 1970 that it would be the basis for a Middle East solution based on the UN Security Council resolution of November 1967.

In early 1970, the Palestinian fedayeen were enjoying the climax of a wave of popularity throughout the Arab world. Arafat kept moving between their bases in Jordan and Arab capitals. He used diplomacy to solve a number of delicate crises and confrontations between the fedayeen and the Arab states, but could not do so in the crises in Jordan. The reason was that the Jordanian government had lost trust and confidence in him and his factions, deciding that Jordan could survive without guerrillas.

In January 1970, sporadic clashes between King Hussein's forces and the fedayeen resulted in over a hundred casualties on both sides. The radical PLO parties hijacked Western airliners and took Western hostages in Jordan, believing that these presented a great challenge to Jordanian sovereignty. As the Rogers peace plan became the top news of most Arab media and diplomatic salons, Arafat was pulled by his factions

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[67] Suleiman Musa, *Tarikh al-Urdun fi al-Qarn al-Ishrin, 1958-95*.

[68] Ibid.

into new battles with the Jordanian Army in Amman and Zarqa from June 6 through 12, 1970. The guerrillas held 90 foreigners in Amman's two largest hotels, freed safely by the king's diplomacy and concessions.[69]

The climax of the civil war took place in September 1970, when the Jordanian Army waged a full-scale attack on the guerrilla bases in the cities using artillery, tank and any available weapons. Field Marshal, Habes al-Majali, was designated military governor and martial law commander in charge of a new military regime. The final drive of the Jordanian Army in its effort to sweep the guerrillas out of their last Jordanian bases in the Ajloun and Jerash took place in April 1971. Hundreds of casualties were inflicted on both sides in four days of savage fighting.[70]

Soon after the end of hostilities, Black September, a group of younger Al-Fatah members who, apparently, opposed Arafat, began its terrorist attacks against Jordanian targets, including hijacking Royal Jordan Airlines planes and kidnapping diplomats. Jordanian Ambassador to London, Zayed Rifai, was shot, but injured only slightly. Jordanian Prime Minister, Wasfi al-Tal, was assassinated in Cairo on November 28, 1971 by four Palestinian members of Black September. The group gathered new dissatisfied Palestinian recruits with a campaign of terrorism against those who they considered to be their enemies. The most shocking and well-planned guerrilla operation, perhaps in history, was Black September's attack on the Israeli Olympic team in Munich, Germany on September 5, 1972. This incident widened the gap between extremist Palestinians and the rest of the world.

There were still 20,000 Iraqi troops in Jordan, deployed to Jordan during the 1967 war, remaining there upon a Jordanian agreement. At the same time, the neighboring Syrian regime was still under the control of the radical Ba'ath faction, who had first provided military training and equipment to PLO guerrillas and had, consequently, contributed to the initiation of the 1967 war. Both Ba'ath regimes were enemies of Arab monarchies, especially the Hashemites.

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[69] *Al-wathaiq al-Urduniya (Jordanian Documents).*

[70] Cooley, *Green March, Black September.*

The PLO's public criticism of Egypt's acceptance of the Rogers Plan in 1970 neutralized Egypt, helping King Hussein move against the PLO. However, even though King Hussein acted without explicit prior assurances of United States support against the PLO, he was hoping to get support from them,, But the king had, in fact, appealed to the US for assurances prior to his military confrontation with the attacking Syrian forces.[71] Nevertheless, US President Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger and other advisers in Washington discussed the possibility of intervention in either a rescue operation to save Americans in Amman, or a larger operation to save King Hussein.[72] They decided to support Jordan if threatened.

The Jordanian success in expelling the PLO and resisting the Syrian forces enhanced the Jordanian political position. The military challenge to Israel from Jordanian territory was ended, and most significantly, the PLO position as a strong rival for the leadership of the Palestinians in Jordan was eliminated. Generally speaking, the Palestinian-Jordanian population of the East Bank did not get involved in the civil war, with the exception of those in the refugee camps where PLO bases existed. As for the West Bankers, especially after the defeat of the PLO and the acceptance of major Arab states of the Jordanian policy for a political solution, they depended on Jordan for the removal of the Israeli occupation. For the PLO, the war increased their negative attitudes and views toward the Hashemites. But Arafat, on the other hand, repeated on every possible occasion that Al-Fatah had no wish or intention of overthrowing Hussein or other Arab rulers. Instead he blamed radical factions within the PLO for the civil war. Arafat said, "We are not in the business of revolution or ideology, our job is to liberate Palestine. But if we are forced to, we will fight anybody who tries to obstruct us in this."[73] At the Arab level, the civil war in Jordan had strained not only Jordanian-Palestinian relations, but Jordanian-Arab relations, as demonstrated by the breaking of their relations with Syria, the closing of its borders, and the Syrian military intervention (which threatened to invite outside forces to intervene).

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[71] Interview, Ambassador (Ret.) Dean L. Brown, Washington, DC, 1986.

[72] Cooley, *Green March, Black September*.

[73] Ibid.

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C.   THE UNITED ARAB KINGDOM PLAN: 1972

The direct result of the Jordanian civil war was, initially, the marginalization of the role of the PLO. From a strong position, where it had been freely able to share de facto authority of the state with Jordan, it found itself forced to seek refuge in Lebanon. They had to establish new political and military bases among a largely apolitical, and much less numerous, population of Palestinian refugees.[74] For their part, while many Jordanian Palestinians agreed with the PLO aspirations of achieving an independent Palestinian state, they now had to deal with the existing reality of the Jordanian state away from previous PLO support. King Hussein repeatedly stated that the Palestinian identity ought to find proper expression within the framework of a Jordanian-Palestinian partnership – a partnership which he said he cherished very much – in which no side should dominate the other.[75] Yet the Jordanian civil war in 1970 that resulted in the expulsion of PLO fighters to Lebanon and Syria weakened the partnership.

The Arab and Israeli competitors strove to take advantage of the deteriorating situation between Jordan and the PLO as a way to further weaken Jordanian-Palestinian relations, preferably to them, to a point of no return. For its part, the Jordanian government also sought to exploit its military gains over the PLO by exposing a new initiative that would wipe out Palestinian resentment toward Jordan in the aftermath of the September civil war. It would also serve to restore the Jordanian role in the Arab-Israeli conflict that had been strained by the Six-Day War and the PLO rivalry.

King Hussein wanted to restart his struggle to restore the West Bank through a partial or separate deal with Israel, as delegated by the Khartoum Arab Summit, held in the wake of the 1967 war. Hussein's objective of negotiating for the return of the West Bank appeared to much of the public to be more practical than did the PLO strife of seeking "a secular, democratic, state in all-Palestinian territory" through a protracted guerrilla war.[76] The king's new efforts came to a halt in 1969-71 peace talks, however,

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[74] Salibi, *A Modern History of Jordan.*

[75] Suleiman Musa, *Tarikh al-Urdunfi al-Qarn al-Ishrin, 1958-95.*

[76] Alain Gresh, *The PLO: Toward and Independent Palestinian State,* translated by A.M. Berret. London: Zed Books, Ltd., 1985.

due to Israeli intransigence and PLO opposition. Thus, the Jordanian role again weakened. The overthrow of the Ba'ath regime in Syria by the pragmatic General al-Assad was the only option they adopted, thereby weakening the PLO's military strategy with regard to the Palestinian issue.

In 1972, Hussein saw a chance on the horizon for new peace talks. He realized that the maintenance of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, cooled due to the events of 1970-71, would be necessary for any peaceful solution. On March 15, 1972, Hussein announced the United Arab Kingdom Plan as a more appropriate framework for the development of a Jordanian-Palestinian partnership. The plan included a new federal constitutional structure for Jordan and the occupied Palestinian territories (after Israeli withdrawal).[77] It also added the Gaza Strip to the West Bank structure. The plan envisaged a federal union between Jordan, on the one hand, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip, on the other. Federal executive power, which was to be assumed by the king, would encompass foreign affairs, defense and national development.[78]

It is interesting to note that Hussein resorted to a technique of his grandfather, Abdullah, of using territorial, institutional devices, in a complementary manner, to deal with nationalistic and political problems posed by the Palestinian question.[79] The plan represented a conscious effort by the king to refute the PLO cry, as well as mounting propaganda that Jordan was bent on containing the Palestinian identity from developing. This also led to the fear that Palestinians would have a separate state, while at the same time, Jordan had been diligently preserving the letter and spirit of the unity of the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples since 1950. The Hashemites stated, in its defense, that the plan was intended to counter any initiatives to find an alternative homeland for the Palestinians outside their country.

Jordan sent a number of envoys to tour the Arab world to explain the plan, but failing to persuade Arab leaders. Arab reactions to the king's plan were swift. Egypt,

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[77] Moshe, *The Palestinian Entity, 1959-74.*

[78] Aryeh Y. Yodfat and Yuval Arnon-Ohannar, *PLO: Strategy and Politics.* London: Croom Helm, 1981, p. 159-165.

[79] Suleiman Musa, *Tarikh al-Urdunfi al-Qarn al-Ishrin, 1958-95.*

which encouraged Jordan in 1967 to unilaterally seek to restore the West Bank, broke off relations with Jordan over the plan. Syria also rejected the plan, and broke off relations with Jordan, the PLO accusing the king of impairing the Palestinian cause by proposing autonomy, rather than independence, for Palestinians.[80] The project for a United Kingdom was quietly withdrawn, as the king and the Jordanian government no longer made reference to it.[81]

The PLO continued to pursue its claim of being the sole representative of the Palestinian people, a claim always countered by the Jordanian government. In 1973, the PLO was recognized by the non-aligned nations at the fourth summit of the movement in Algiers as "a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." I In November, it was recognized by the Arab League in a secret resolution as "the sole representative of the Palestinian people." However, Jordan expressed its reservations. The issue of representation finally came to a close when the Arab states made their decision, at the seventh summit in Rabat in 1974, recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of Palestinian people everywhere, which was soon followed by international recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians by the United Nations General Assembly.[82] In response, King Hussein declared that Jordan no longer bore any political responsibility toward the Palestinian question, and that such responsibility should be shouldered by the PLO, itself.[83]

In later years, as in his speech of February 1986 suspending the agreement between the PLO and Jordan, King Hussein referred to the United Arab Kingdom plan as an appeal to the PLO to demonstrate Jordan's long-term commitment to Palestinian political rights beyond the mere acquisition of the territory lost in 1967.

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[80] Yezid Sayigh, "Jordan in the 1980s: Legitimacy, Entity and Identity," in *Politics and the Economy in Jordan*, edited by Rodney Wilson. New York: Routledge, 1991, p. 167-83.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Suleiman Musa, *Tarikh al-Urdunfi al-Qarn al-Ishrin, 1958-95*.

[83] Isam Sakhnini, "Al-Kayan Al-Filastini," *Shu-un Filastiniyyah,* nos. 41-42, January/February 1975.

D.   THE POLITICAL ECONOMY VS. JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN
      RELATIONS

Migration to, from and across Jordan since the Palestine exodus of 1948 has played a key role in the country's politics, economy and society. These movements have several underlying interacting patterns. The main patterns are connected to regional geopolitics, the fluctuations of the oil economy in the Persian Gulf, and efforts of the Hashemite Kingdom to ensure its own stability. Jordan is an ideal case study for how various forms of mobility can have strong political and economic implications, both domestically and regionally.

Jordan was established in 1921, within borders drawn by colonial powers. It soon became the first host nation for Palestinian refugees who arrived in several waves following the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. These refugees formed a large and integral part of the kingdom's population. This migration has constantly posed a challenge to the Jordanian regime in power at the time. At the same time, however, this migration has been an asset to the country's economic development through the assistance received from the international community to help resettle and accommodate the refugees.[84]

Thousands of Palestinians left Jordan to seek jobs in the Gulf states, especially in the early 1970s, when the oil boom bolstered the region. This involved labor exports to meet the oil-producing Gulf states' demand for highly skilled workers and paid high salaries. The remittances received from those Palestinians, together with foreign aid, contributed to developing sectors of the Jordanian economy by providing start-up money for Jordanian businesses and for large state-sponsored projects.[85]

Jordan is host to the largest number of Palestinian refugees of any single country in the world. The size of the Palestinian population in Jordan is such that it has allowed successive Israeli leaders to claim that "Jordan is Palestine." Therefore, in addition to the challenge of economically integrating the Palestinians, Jordanian regimes have always

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[84] Sayigh, "Jordan in the 1980s: Legitimacy, Entity and Identity."

[85] S. Shami, "Emigration Dynamics in Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon," in R. Appleyard, *Emigration Dynamics in Developing Countries,* vol. IV: The Arab Region, UNFPA and IOM. Aldershot:Ashgate, 1990.

aimed at controlling the independent expression of their political claims within the kingdom to prevent Jordan from becoming an alternative home to Palestinians and to preserve the rule of the Hashemites. The Palestinians' political integration within Jordan was highly conditioned on their allegiance to a ruling monarchy that strove first to protect its own stability. Some Palestinians have accepted these terms, while others, especially educated ones, found the government's stance unacceptable, thus choosing to emigrate from Jordan. The Jordanian-PLO struggle during the 1960s and 1970s polarized Jordanian society. The balance between Transjordanians and Palestinians within Jordan had come under strain. However, Jordanian supremacy in the 1970 events led the Jordanian regime to establish its identity as a Jordanian, not Palestinian, state.[86] Jordanization became part of the policy in order to foster the Jordanian national identity, thus evoking various preferences over what strategies were best suited for the government efforts to gain international support for Jordanian sovereignty.

Jordanization encouraged Jordanians to stick to their national identity at domestic, regional and international levels as a response to any threats towards its existence. However, it also aroused a stronger, though often hushed, sense of Palestinian nationalism in Jordan. The rift was exacerbated by the development of a division of labor, with Palestinians dominating the private sector and Transjordanians dominating the public sector.[87] International Monetary Fund and World Bank pressures undercut job security in the state sector and led to the widespread and vocal Transjordan resentment of Palestinian dominance in the private sector. To some extent, this division was evident before 1967, and had to do with the nature of the state and how it was set up. However, this division became much clearer after 1970-71 for a number of reasons.[88] The first reason was that after 1970-71 the Palestinians were considered suspect, and their numbers were reduced in the security services and the government bureaucracy, as part of a policy of reorganizing the Jordanian house and the instruments of self-protection. This

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[86] Marc Lynch, *State Interests and Public Spheres: The International Politics of Jordan's Identity.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

[87] Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians Palestinians & The Hashemite Kingdom.*

[88] Paul Lalor, "Jordan, Israel and Palestine: Looking Beyond the Peace Process," *Middle East*, 2, 2001.

process came as a result of the PLO policy towards Jordan in the early 1970s, and the Rabat summit resolution of 1974, which recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians.

The second reason was the repeated propagation of the notion voiced by Israeli right-wing leaders that Jordan was, in fact, Palestine.[89] This increased the drive towards "Transjordanizing" the public sector and the security services, reducing the public profile of Palestinian-Jordanians. The third reason was the division of labor, by which Palestinians were able to take advantage of employment opportunities in the Gulf. Remittances pouring back into Jordan from the middle of the 1970s heightened the public-private sector divide.

In 1996, a study conducted by Jordan University's Center for Strategic Studies on the level of private sector capital participation in the country's economy showed that Palestinian participation in the capital was much higher than Transjordanian participation.[90]

The divisions between Palestinians and Jordanians in Jordan were manageable at a time of economic boom. However, they became much more difficult in the 1980s and 1990s for several reasons. First, with the downturn in the economy in the 1980s, the IMF and World Bank advocated programs that threatened cuts in public and private sectors,, leading to Transjordanian resentment and Palestinian fears. Second, the 1991 Gulf crisis deepened the division with the expulsion of more than 300,000 Palestinians to Jordan, which increased Transjordanian fears that they were losing out to successive waves of Palestinian refugees. A third reason why divisions between Palestinians and Transjordanians emerged more forcefully resulted from King Hussein's decision to disengage from the West Bank in 1988, and the beginning of democratization the following year.

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[89] Paul Lalor, "Jordan, Israel and Palestine: Looking Beyond the Peace Process," *Middle East*, 2, 2001.

[90] Ibid.

By 1999, the Jordanian society debated many issues, such as Palestinian citizenship in Jordan; Palestinian supremacy in the private sector; and discrimination. The pan-Arabists and pan-Islamists both supported the notion of national unity between Palestinians and Jordanians.

This review of the development in Jordan does not mean to necessarily imply that a conflict between Jordanians and Palestinians is imminent; nor does it indicate that democracy in Jordan has been reversed.[91]

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[91] Paul Lalor, "Jordan, Israel and Palestine: Looking Beyond the Peace Process," *Middle East*, 2, 2001.

IV. JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS IN THE 1980s AND EARLY 1990s

A.   PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION AND THE PLO'S POLITICAL RISE

Sadat signaled an abrupt and radical change in the Arab world starting in 1973 when he, along with President Assad of Syria, launched the October War. On October 6, 1973, Egyptian and Syrian forces surprised the Israelis in both the Suez Canal and Golan Heights. The fighting on both fronts ceased when the UN Security Council on October 22, 1973 adopted Resolution 338, which called for parties to obey a cease-fire and start peace negotiations on the basis of Resolution 242 in order to reach a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.[92]

The Arabs decided to meet to prepare for the peace talks. Accordingly, the Arab Summit was held in Algeria on November 26-28, 1973. The Summit's resolution regarding the Palestinian question asserted its adherence to restoring the national rights of Palestinians, and also maintained that the PLO was the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Jordan expressed its objection to this last article, which would deprive it of representing the Palestinians who constituted a large portion of Jordan's population.

Jordan, in an attempt to paper over the Algerian decision, participated in the Geneva Conference. Rafai headed a Jordanian delegation and outlined Jordan's position on the essential requirements of peace: Israel's total withdrawal, evacuation of the Arab city of Jerusalem, and the right of all states in the region to have their territorial integrity and independence respected.[93]

Again, the next Arab Summit in Rabat in 1974 adopted a resolution emphasizing the PLO as the sole Palestinian representative. Reluctantly, King Hussein joined the Arab consensus and accepted their decision. Both Palestinians and Transjordanians welcomed their decision. Soon after the king's return to Jordan from Rabat (within 25 days) a new government was formed in Jordan. Palestinian representation in the parliament, which

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[92] Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom.*

[93] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship.*

was suspended at the same time this government was formed, was reduced from 46% to 20%. The king sought to show his compliance with the Rabat resolution, urging the people of Jordan, both Transjordanians and Palestinians, to accept the resolution and support it.[94] The king wanted to prevent any rupture and polarization among the people that might destabilize the country. In November 1974, Arafat addressed the UN General Assembly when the UN allowed the PLO to have an observer delegation to the United Nations. The UN approved the Rabat resolution. The Palestinians, with all such developments, became more optimistic that a solution to their problem was not as remote as some suggested.

The Arab decisions with respect to Palestinian rights and representation adopted in both the Algeria and Rabat summits not only strengthened the PLO, but also saved it, as it strove to find a foothold in the international arena, regardless of its severe political and organizational deficiencies. After the 1973 war, the PLO became more rational, and even more aware of its capabilities and limitations. It realized that the military option espoused previously as the only option for liberating Palestine was no longer viable or practical by itself, but instead that a parallel lines diplomatic track was necessary, similar to the Syrian and Egyptian approach.

Thus a major shift towards a moderate approach became a necessity, and the new reality made it unlikely that the PLO would continue to enjoy unequivocal support from Arab states. This increased the concern of the Palestinian leaders that if a compromise were reached over the West Bank and Gaza the PLO would not be included.[95] The new political approach of the PLO coincided with the trends in the Arab world toward seeking a diplomatic solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the Arab countries favored an active, independent Palestinian political role, since the pan-Arab ideals were declining during this period.[96]

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[94] Salibi, *A Modern History of Jordan.*

[95] Hussein J. Agha, "What State for Palestinians," *Journal of Palestine Studies,* 6, 2, Winter 1975, p. 11.

[96] Foud Ajami, "The End of Pan-Arabism," *Foreign Affairs,* 11, 2, Winter 1978/79, p. 355-373.

The PLO was encouraged to follow steps similar to those taken by Egypt and Syria. The resurgence of the PLO was not due mainly because of the organization's pragmatism or to the triumph of nationalistic policies in Egypt and Syria.[97] The entire Arab context was favorable at that time. The Arab stand in 1973 was strengthened by the use of oil as a political weapon, which directed the world to the Arab-Israeli conflict before it was quickly refocused on the Gulf. Yet King Faisal's famous stand, the use of the oil weapon during the war, led to the re-emergence of the old Egyptian-Saudi-Syrian coalition, which stood in favor of the PLO.[98] This alliance was favorable to Jordan, whose relations with its members were weak and cool due to the adverse effects of the 1970 clashes, as well as to the Jordanian stand on reactivation of the eastern front. This subject had generated controversy between Jordan, on one hand, and Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Syria, on the other. Since 1963, when Israel began to divert the waters of the River Jordan, and the subsequent Six-Day War, Arab states had demanded that Jordan allow the stationing of Arab troops on its borders with Israel. These countries also urged Jordan to allow fedayeen activities to be launched against Israel from Jordanian soil.[99]

Jordan, however, had its own perception of the way the eastern front should be strengthened, and it did not see any military significance to allowing fedayeen activities to be launched from Jordanian soil. Jordan realized that such activities, and concentration of forces on its borders with Israel, would justify Israeli retaliation, not only against it, but also against adjacent Arab countries, as well. Jordanian strategists saw that the involvement of Arab countries in the fight against Israel would be achieved by deliberate and comprehensive political Arab strategy prior to deployment of forces.

The constant strife of Arabs to dislodge Jordan from the West Bank contributed to the rise of the PLO's role. Some analysts believe that one reason for excluding Jordan from the planning and participation in the 1973 war was the desire on the part of Assad

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[97] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship.*

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid.

and Sadat to assign responsibility for the Palestinian problem to the PLO. This desire was crystallized in the Algiers-Rabat decisions of 1973-74.[100]

As the regional environment became more favorable to the rise of the PLO, the international atmosphere and tendency seemed ripe for or, at least less hostile to, the establishment of a role for the organization in the West Bank and Gaza.[101] According to Alan Hart, both King Faisal and Nixon became convinced that the PLO's new political realism ought to be seized upon and rewarded by the establishment in the West Bank and Gaza of a Palestinian mini-state.[102] Thus, the idea of national Palestinian leadership seemed to suit Kissinger's step-by-step approach to policy in the Middle East. Kissinger, and for that matter Israel, preferred not to deal with the Arab side as a single negotiating bloc.[103]

The Soviet Union's relations with the PLO became more supportive, especially after the expulsion of Soviet advisors from Egypt in July 1972. The Soviets seemed more concerned about their role in the region, as Egypt and Jordan were viewed as pro-western.[104] The Soviets were alarmed by Kissinger's step-by-step approach in the region, so they were keen to strengthen their relations with more radical Arabs, like the PLO, in order to maintain their interests in the region as well as be a key player in any peace settlement in the Middle East.

B.   PLO FRUSTRATION AND DIPLOMATIC OBSTACLES: 1974-1984

The Palestinian representation, regardless of the Algeria-Rabat resolutions, remained an open and unsettled issue. Jordan and the PLO continued to view each other as rivals and competitors. However, the rivalry was not the only setback for Palestinians, but factionalism also divided the movement into those who advocated a narrow policy

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[100] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship*, p. 152.

[101] Alan Hart, *Arafat: Terrorist or Peacekeeper?* London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984, chapters 17, 18.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, chapter 7. Also Ishaq L. Ghanayem and Alden H. Voth, *The Kissinger Legacy*. New York: Praeger, 1984, chapters 3-5.

[104] Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the PLO." In *The Palestinian and Middle East Conflict*, p. 230.

(such as "Palestine First"), or those who were pan-Arabist, or patrons of other ideologies. Furthermore, the split was accentuated by the social and political, as well as personal, backgrounds of Palestinian leaders.

Fatah leaders were all founding members of the movement. They were all born in Palestine in late 1920, had grown up together, had coexisted and lived in the same environment with their families, having had similar experiences, particularly those associated with the Palestinian exodus in 1948. They had all been students in the Palestine Student Union, and participated in the resistance movement against Israel in 1955 and 1956. They had also all been harassed by Nasser's regime.[105] Fatah leaders had formulated a concept that the struggle against Israel rested, above all, on the Palestinian people, whereas other Arab initiatives toward Israel were dictated by *raison d'etat,* and not by genuine commitment to the Palestinian cause.[106] The leaders of other PLO factions were either non-Palestinians or non-Muslims who had been born outside of Palestine, they came from the middle class and their attachment to Palestine was ideological, not nationalistic. They opted for hard-line policies.

The PLO division also coincided with a similar one among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, which was also divided along political and social lines. Some of them favored closer association with Jordan, while others preferred a pro-PLO option, often even differing on what constituted the Palestinian entity. In 1967, more than 200 leading, Palestinian figures made known their opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian entity, in whatever form and under whatever name, and declared that the elimination of the effects of Israel's aggression demanded pan-Arab responsibility.[107] Other prominent Palestinian notables in the West Bank and Gaza attempted to cooperate with Israel and secure status as recognized leaders. Some of these notables contacted Israeli authorities and tested their reaction to the formation of a Palestine state beholden to Israel, in one way or another.[108]

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[105] Gresh, *The PLO: Toward and Independent Palestinian State,* p. 111-118.

[106] Ibid.

[107] *The Resistance of the West Bank of Jordan to Israeli Occupation, 1967.* Beirut: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1967.

[108] Gresh, *The PLO: Toward and Independent Palestinian State,* p. 68.

There was, of course, in the West Bank and Gaza a strong national movement that identified with the PLO. The main objectives of this movement were the rejection of the Israelis' occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, unity of the Jordanian and Palestinian people, a just peace that would ensure the right of self-determination to the Palestinian people, and coordination between efforts for their cause that came from inside or outside Palestinians.[109]

In the post-1973 era, it was the PLO, not the rival Arab countries, that tried to unsettle Jordan's influence in the West Bank. The new Palestinian leadership was seen as descendents of the Mufti and his followers, who used the Arab arena to further spread its anti-Jordan policies, as their ancestors had against Hashemites from 1920 to 1950.[110]

The Jordanian regime, along with the Palestinians, were concerned about the fate of the occupied territories, believing that abandoning the West Bank would leave a vacuum to be filled by the PLO. They worried that an independent, radical state in the West Bank and Gaza could unleash irredentist pressures among Palestinian refugees and pro-PLO elements in Jordan. Israel could use Jordan's withdrawal from the contest as a pretext for annexation of the West Bank and Gaza, and the expulsion of the Palestinian people to Jordan would further endanger the Hashemite regime in Jordan.

Israel refused to deal with the PLO under any circumstances, and the United States took the same attitude. US government conditions for recognition of a state were difficult for the PLO to meet. However, the cooperation of both countries was necessary for peace. This cooperation became more important as the Arabs and the PLO opted for a political solution rather than a military one. Eventually, the US and Israel became involved in the determination of the Palestinian representation when they showed their preference dealing with Jordan on the Palestinian issue, rather than the PLO.[111]

Despite the PLO mistakes in Jordan in 1970, the Arab League voted in 1973 and 1974 for Palestinian representation to be the PLO's comprehensive responsibility, in spite

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[109] *Middle East Record.* Tel Aviv: Shiloah Center for Middle East and North African Studies, 1969-1970, p. 388-389.

[110] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship*, p. 156.

[111] *Middle East Record.*

of it's being weak, fragmented and ill-equipped to take on such responsibility. As a result, King Hussein started the Jordanization process in the regime and administration. The Arab leaders who earlier pressed the king to meet the demands of the PLO appealed to him later not to continue his policy of Jordanization.

The PLO, still, attempted to exploit the Rabat decision of 1974 to the fullest extent possible. It practically established veto power over any peace arrangement, which fell short of its demands. Furthermore, it used the occasion to undermine Jordan's influence in the West Bank and among Palestinians in Jordan.[112] It wanted Jordan to continue to provide economic and administrative assistance to the Palestinians, while leaving the role of political leadership to the PLO. Having lost its political and military base in Jordan, the PLO attempted to regain a footing, since Jordan's legal clout was necessary to counter Israel's claim that there was no party more entitled than it was to the West Bank.[113] The Rabat decision called on Jordanians and the PLO to put the decision into effect. They discussed the future of the West Bank after liberation. They disagreed on two issues: first, whether to try to settle its future status, at this stage, while the territory was under occupation, or await the elimination of Israel, or instead whether to let the Palestinians decide for themselves; and second, whether to have a federation or confederation between the two entities, as the PLO insisted on determining in advance the future relationship with Jordan. It seemed strange that the two sides negotiated over something neither possessed.[114]

The Arab political system was not stable. From 1975-1977 Egypt and Syria pressed Arafat to come to an agreement with Jordan as soon as possible. The PLO obliged, and effectively dropped most of its earlier demands, except the need to determine *a priori* the future regime of the West Bank and Gaza. Jordan insisted on its United Arab Kingdom plan, while the PLO reiterated its demand to first establish an independent state, which could then join a federal or confederal framework.[115]

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[112] Kessing Archives 26926A (November 1974), 27229A, 27235 (May 1975).

[113] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship*, p. 158.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Hart, *Arafat: Terrorist or Peacekeeper?*

Under mounting pressure from both Assad and Sadat, Arafat agreed in 1976 that Jordan and the prospective Palestinians should form a federation.[116] This was intended to assure the Israelis that there would be no Palestinian state in Palestine in the future. The eighth Arab Summit, in Cairo in October 1976, reinstated Jordan's central role in the West Bank because of Jordan's international role on behalf of the Palestinians. Jordan was more internationally accepted in this role than the PLO, as was the case during the Geneva peace conference.[117]

Internal division and external constraints upon the PLO further weakened its new status, thereby becoming more of a burden on the shoulders of Arab states, which had earlier supported all Arab Summit decisions with respect to the organization's special status as the sole representative and responsible for Palestinians' affairs. The PLO, divided into factions, did not agree to attend a possible new session of the Geneva conference that the United States and USSR were pushing to reconvene. But the dilemma for the Palestinians was the representation issue. Israel and the United States still banned the participation of the PLO. The Arab states indicated to the PLO that it would have to accept any compromised solution that could be found by the Arab states and the United States for its representation in Geneva. Most Arab states, including Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia, supported the idea of a link between a Palestinian entity and Jordan. This idea was crystallized in 1977, shortly before Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in November. Eventually, Egypt reached a peace deal with Israel and exited from the Arab-Israeli conflict. Egypt, thereby, changed the balance of power in the Middle East and led to its expulsion from the Arab League. The PLO rejected the EC Venice Declaration of June 13, 1980, which called for a comprehensive peace settlement on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

In September 1982, President Reagan launched his peace initiative, or plan for peace in the Middle East. The plan supported the idea of a federal system between two states, Jordan and Palestine. Despite its acceptance of the principle of Palestinian

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[116] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship*, p. 159.

[117] *MECS*, vol. 1, 1976-77, p. 480.

independence, Jordan still favored a strong Jordanian-Palestinian connection.[118] Jordan welcomed the plan as positive and called it the most courageous stand taken by an American administration since 1956.[119]

Until the Madrid conference, Israel opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, and its leaders continued to object to the involvement of the PLO in the peace process. However, the Jordanian peace policy which had been formulated had called for the involvement of all parties in any envisioned settlement. In the absence of a peace settlement, the Middle East region would continue to be a source of extremism and terrorism for all sides.

C.   HUSSEIN-ARAFAT AGREEMENT: FEBRUARY 1985

King Hussein had tried to reach a political solution with Israel through international auspices based on the principle of the exchange of land for peace, as embodied in UN Resolution 242, since the Six-Day War. However, his efforts were hindered by, among other obstacles, the rise of the PLO and its internationally recognized status as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people as endorsed by the Rabat Arab Summit of 1974. During the 1970s, however, the main stream of the PLO, led by Fatah's Arafat, had in fact directed the political process through focusing on diplomacy over military means. Such a trend facilitated its recognition by the international community for representing the Palestinian people as endorsed by the Rabat Arab Summit. However, the PLO's hopes were frustrated by the Israelis, with support of the US, rejection in dealing with the PLO. The only option in this dilemma was through PLO cooperation with Jordan for negotiations in the short term. This way, Jordan could combine its international status and acceptability to Israel with the PLO representative role, and popular support among the Palestinians in the Diaspora and the occupied territories in a joint political stand.[120]

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[118] *MECS*, vol. 6, 1981-82, p. 682; Dinis Bush, "American Middle East Policy: Peace Stability and the Jordan Option." *Potomac Review*, nos. 26-27, 1984-85, p. 1-32.

[119] *Newsweek*, October 4, 1982.

[120] Gresh, *The PLO: Toward and Independent Palestinian State*.

However, there were many obstacles to this approach. First, there was the civil war legacy of bitterness and distrust on both sides. From the Jordanian perspective, the dangers of cooperation with the PLO might lead the PLO to try, once again, to attempt to assert its leadership over the East Bank Jordanian-Palestinians, or it might resume its military activity and provoke Israeli direct reprisals against Jordan. Even if Arafat was personally sincere, which Jordan doubted, there was the reality that the PLO was a coalition of many different groups, of many loyalties beholden to different patrons. This exposed the largely moderate group and leadership of Fatah to pressures from radicals, leftists and communist elements. Arafat was well aware of these constraints. Undoubtedly, he, along with other Palestinians, still remembered the dark days of the 1970 civil war, perhaps sharing with Palestinians the suspicion that an agreement with King Hussein could be used to exploit the PLO and give legitimacy to the Hashemites to restore the occupied territory to their control.

In the period separating the Syrian-inspired revolt in the ranks of al-Fatah forces in Lebanon (May 1983), and the conclusion of the King Hussein-Arafat February 1985 accord in Amman, Jordan's and Arafat's political views converged. Jordan's main concern remained the fear that Israel would annex the occupied territories. In September 1984, King Hussein felt at ease when Shimon Peres took back the seat of prime ministry in Israel, unfortunately only for a two-year term. King Hussein felt that it gave him an opportunity to maneuver for peace. King Hussein was aware that without a solid and credible Palestinian partner to share with him the risks of negotiating with Israel, the task would be hard. The only Palestinian people who could shoulder this heavy burden with him were the PLO and Arafat, who still held the precarious mandate of the Rabat summit as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians.[121]

The representation mandate, too, was in serious danger due to Arafat's decreasing credibility after his forced departure and removal from Lebanon, in addition to the fighting that erupted among al-Fatah factions. Ironically, for the PLO, these developments drew attention to the role the inhabitants of the occupied territories might

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[121] Abdollah Frangi, *The PLO and Palestine*. London: Monthly Review Press, 1983.

play in any peaceful settlement. This required the Hashemites to exert their efforts to enhance the position of Arafat in the occupied territories, and even within the PLO.

The Palestinian National Council held its last session on February 16, 1983 in Algeria. The meeting was preceded by public criticism of Arafat's late negotiations with King Hussein regarding accepting the Reagan plan as a first step toward international negotiations, led by the PFLP and DFLP. The PNC had rejected the Reagan plan. However, it had accepted a key article of the plan – i.e., a confederation of Palestine and Jordan. A confederation could be concluded only after the independence of Palestine, and on the basis of two independent states.[122]

The renewed fighting in Lebanon as well as the rebellion within Fatah against Arafat by rival Palestinian groups supported by Syria made it clear that Arafat needed to make a choice: either embrace a more militant strategy, endorsed by the PNC to leave Arafat with the titular leadership of a united organization, or lead his moderate wing into an alliance with King Hussein, based on establishing a joint negotiation team and a confederation.[123]   It was not known if Arafat would make it to the scheduled PNC meeting in Amman which would be boycotted by major parties, the PFLP and DFLP, and perhaps his attendance would contribute to an acute split in the PLO.[124] Eventually, the benefits Arafat would harvest from Amman would be significant.

Jordanian television was used as a means of propaganda to rally PLO supporters and hold the pro-Arafat majority in the occupied territories to their loyalty and allegiance. Furthermore, he obtained administrative and organizational benefits by being allowed to reactivate the operations of Fatah offices in Amman that had been closed in the aftermath of the civil war in 1970. The reopening of such offices increased Arafat's contacts with his supporters in the West Bank and Gaza. The PLO always feared losing their prestige, which would move King Hussein to gain the West Bankers' support and cooperation to enter into negotiations. Although it might be hard to accept such a hypothesis, the situation on the ground in the occupied territories was always changing. Israel's coalition

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[122] Frangi, *The PLO and Palestine*, p. 251.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Rami G. Khuri, "How Close to Being Leaderless." *Jordan Times*, November 13, 1984, p. 4.

government at the time was exercising heavy pressures on the people in the occupied territories. King Hussein's arguments that such pressures were a real threat to the existence of people on Palestinian soil, along with the hope that there was an appropriate opportunity for the start of negotiations based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338, the United States (Reagan) plan, the Arab consensus and with a rational Israeli negotiator (Peres), began to have an impact upon most people, including loyal PLO supporters. One prominent PLO official from the West Bank commented privately, "If King Hussein really could negotiate the return of most of the occupied territories, he would be a hero on the West Bank, and Arafat would be finished."[125]

In fact, by the conclusion of the Camp David Accords, together with the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in March 1979, the Arab opposition countries forced Arafat to cooperate and meet Jordanian demands. At the Arab level, the joint Jordanian-PLO committee administered the distribution of Arab aid, allocated during the Baghdad Summit in 1979, designed to enhance the solidarity of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. The National Guidance Committee, primarily and in a response to Camp David, brought together the pro-PLO mayors, who won the town councils' elections, with the defeated pro-Jordanians. Although the other pro-Jordanian elected officials, Frayis in Bethlehem and al-Shawa in Gaza, were not members, a pro-Jordanian faction did, in fact, exist among the apparent pro-PLO committee. Out of 23 members, ten were mainstream Fatah supporters, four from the PLO rejectionist camp and four had pro-Jordanian tendencies.[126] Each group attempted to dominate the committee, which led to its ineffectiveness. The leftist main concern was an increased level of cooperation and a form of alliance between pro-Fatah elements and pro-Jordanians, aimed at restricting the hard-line leftist forces. Unlike the leftists, the moderates tended to maintain, and even promote, contacts with Jordan and were hesitant to confront the Israeli government. They did not even like Jordan's participation in the distribution of pan-Arab aid under the

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[125] Interview with a PLO official, Cambridge, Mass., 1986.

[126] Emile Sahliyeh, *In Search of Leadership: West Bank Politics Since 1967*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1988.

agreement reached at the Baghdad summit in 1978. The National Guidance Committee was weak and in jeopardy before it was banned by the Begin government in 1982. [127]

It was obvious that the coordination and cooperation between pro-Jordanians and pro-Arafat loyalists continued, and even developed, as the PLO lost its bases in Lebanon. The division and struggle within the organization served the pro-Jordanians as Arafat's loyalists attempted to increase their support. Fatah and Arafat periodically dealt and met with pro-Jordanian leaders while some pan-Arab funds allotted to the PLO were spent to gain the backing of pro-Jordanian politicians, who now became more respectable as they were often involved in direct contacts between Chairman Arafat and King Hussein.[128]

It was evident that there were a lot of political elites in the West Bank and Gaza who strongly supported, and even proposed, an alliance between Jordan and the PLO toward securing Israeli withdrawal. King Hussein addressed these elites during the seventeenth PNC in Amman on November 22, 1984.[129] He praised their solidarity in preserving independent decision-making by resisting the attempts which tried to prevent the conference from being held. The king described the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship as special. He invoked the holy status of Jerusalem as "the invaders' threshold to Jordan," and said that Jordan was the gateway to Palestine. He asserted the need for cooperation in order to restore the special Jordanian-Palestinian relationship that had been missing from Arab and Palestinian actions. He stated that the Jordanian-Palestinian option required sticking to UN Resolution 242, based on the principle of the exchange of land for peace as a viable basis for any peace formula initiated. This constituted a general framework for any international peace conference under UN auspices and was not negotiable .The PLO had to attend the conference on equal footing with other parties. The king indicated that the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship in the future should be worked out by both peoples: "No one has the right to determine this relationship on their behalf or interfere with it, whether he is an enemy, brother, or friend." The last words of his address were directed to people under occupation: "The occupied territories can endure no courtesies or one-

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[127] Gersen Kieval, *Party Politicism in Israel and the Occupied Territories.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983.

[128] Sahliyeh, *In Search of Leadership: West Bank Politics Since 1967*, p. 165.

[129] King Hussein's address, "Amman Domestic Service," November 22, 1984.

upsmanship. Both are weapons we put in the enemy's hands that would help him to quickly complete his plans and projects for annexing the territory and expelling its inhabitants."[130]

For his part, Arafat's views complemented the king's words and vision by announcing his intent to move toward finding a political solution through international conference, based upon, as he said, "adherence to international resolutions over legitimacy." He asserted his commitment to the independence of Jordan besides an independent Palestine:

> We clearly declare this so that no one or party will have an illusion about any alternative homeland except Palestine. All of us should stand side-by-side in solidarity with our brothers and people in Jordan in order to destroy Sharon and his dreams and to respond to his serious threat to Jordan.[131]

As a result, negotiations to draw up a formal agreement were immediately opened and intensified at the start of the new year and over the following months until they produced the February 11, 1985 Amman Accord. The agreements included the following clauses relative to the principles and mechanism for settlement:

1. Land in exchange for peace, as cited in the UN Resolution, including the Security Council Resolution;

2. The right of self-determination when the Jordanians and Palestinians move to achieve the above within the framework pan-Arab confederation that is intended to be established between the two states;

3. Negotiations within the framework of an international conference under UN auspices, consisting of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict including the PLO, which is the Palestinian sole legitimate representative, within a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.[132]

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[130] King Hussein's address, "Amman Domestic Service," November 22, 1984.

[131] Yasir Arafat, address, "Amman Domestic Service," in Arabic, November 22, 1984. Reported in FBIS November 26, 1984, p. A-13.

[132] The text of the Hussein-Arafat Agreement is given in Saunders, op. cit., p. 179. It was released at a press conference by the Jordanian Minister of Information on February 23, 1985. See "Hikmat Releases 'Text' of PLO-Jordanian Agreement," FBIS, February 25, 1985, p. F-1.

The Amman accord was widely supported by the Palestinians in the occupied territories, but within it the PLO disagreement emerged. The PFLP and PDFLP opposed the accord, as did Syria. However, the Arab Summit in Casablanca, Morocco approved it. The United States' stand was neither rejection nor acceptance of all clauses. The US and Jordan were involved in diplomatic discussions over the international conference and the status of the PLO. The Soviet Union refused to support the accord. The PLO was very reluctant to accept UN Resolution 242 unequivocally. Arafat insisted on American endorsement of Palestinian self-determination and direct dialogue with the PLO.[133] The intensified diplomatic efforts failed to convince Arafat to change his stand. On February 19, 1986, King Hussein regrettably announced the suspension of the agreement with the PLO. The irony of this painstaking diplomatic event was that King Hussein, even just before the official negotiations over the agreement began, thought that the weakness of the PLO would make it more flexible, whereas Arafat finally realized that no settlements would be made with the PLO, the hard figure, as he called it.[134]

A review of the accord indicated that the failure of the Amman agreement was caused by two basic differences in interpretation. First, the UN resolutions are cited in general and not specified by name and number. Second was the achievement of self-determination and confederation between Palestine and Israel.

The Jordanians and the Palestinians were very close to reaching the required degree of coordination necessary to start negotiations. The clear precondition of the Americans for the PLO to participate in negotiations was the endorsement of UN 242, which Arafat had always evaded, by saying that they endorsed all UN resolutions. The Amman agreement cited the UN resolution as the first point, in the context of the principle of "Land for peace" which is primarily UN 242. What Arafat had in fact endorsed was the resolution, specifically.[135]

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[133] Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom*, p. 222.

[134] Ibid.

[135] "King Hussein Interviewed on Mideast Peace Prospects." Vienna (Austria) television, February 26, 1985, as reported in FBIS, February 26, 1985, p. F-1.

As for the establishment of a future confederation between Jordan and Palestine, King Hussein indicated that Palestinian self-determination would take effect as soon as the territories were restored. King Hussein and Arafat agreed on the issue of conducting negotiations through an international conference under UN auspices and with participation of all parties, including the PLO, within a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, and on the basis of UN 242 and UN 338. Accordingly, King Hussein issued a statement in Washington in May 1985 urging the PLO to negotiate.[136]

In January 1986, the United States declared that the PLO should publicly state its acceptance of the two UN resolutions in order to receive an invitation to any international conference, including renouncing terrorism and being willing to negotiate peace with Israel. After long and intensive talks in Amman in January and February, the PLO conditioned its endorsement of UN 242 on the approval and recognition of the Palestinian self-determination in the context of Jordanian-Palestinian confederation.[137]

It was evident from King Hussein's speech in the aftermath of suspending the Amman accord with the PLO, as well as from interviews later on, that the issue of Palestinian self-determination was behind his decision. This issue, not an international conference, was a matter for both peoples to decide. The fears emerged that, in the worst case scenario, an internationally recognized and guaranteed Palestinian state would have a more secure status than Jordan itself, and would well claim to represent the Palestinians of the East Bank, as they had attempted in 1970. The king said of this,

> We agreed on everything. Then they came to talk of the issue of self-determination. In our dialogue with them we have not reached this degree of details...we wished that they had said from the beginning, what is wanted is rule and not regaining territory.[138]

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[136] Hussein's February 19 speech on the peace process. Op. cit., Sec. 20.

[137] Ibid., sec. 28.

[138] "Al-Siyasah Interviews King Hussein on Speech. Al-Siyasah (Kuwait), February 25, 1986. Interview published on March 1, as reported in FBIS, March 3, 1986, p. F-1.

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Jordan, again, showed its mistrust and bitterness toward the PLO for not seizing the initiatives and opportunities that might never be available again. Regretting this, the king said, "Jordan opened the door for them, but they continued to move in empty circles...We need to get results for this issue before it is too late."[139]

D.   DISENGAGEMENT: 1988

The suspension of the 1985 Jordanian-Palestinian Amman Accord did not affect the two peoples' relations, as much as it affected the collapse of relations with the PLO. Jordan maintained its contacts and administrative support to the people in the West Bank, in spite of the Algiers-Rabat decisions. The king had tried, at every opportunity, to express concerns and fears about the sufferings of the Palestinian people under occupation. Besides, he had kept them informed of the political developments, and Jordanians continued efforts, at different levels, to solve their problem by securing Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. Therefore, when in February 1986 he suspended the Amman Accord with the PLO, that had taken much time and effort, he addressed the people under occupation about the causes contributing to this outcome, mainly the PLO's inability, divisiveness and evasiveness. In his speech after suspension of the accord, the king gave a full account of the situation and turned the matter over, once again, to the Palestinians in the occupied territories and Diaspora, as well as Arab capitals and organizations.[140] The king wanted to make clear to the Palestinians that they were the real arbiters in the struggle for independence, on one hand, and on the other, he wanted to assure them of Jordan's support if they chose to take action.

Israel tried to exploit the Jordanian-PLO division by encouraging the Palestinians to free themselves from the PLO. Jordan launched a five-year development plan to boost the economic situation of the occupied territories, as well as to decrease their dependency on the Israeli economy. The aim of such an economic plan was to give the Palestinians more political options. The PLO rejected this plan, as being a means employed by Jordan to promote its prestige in front of Palestinians, and to weaken the PLO's respect in the eyes of Palestinians in the occupied territories. However, some Palestinians praised the

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[139] "Al-Siyasah Interviews King Hussein on Speech. Al-Siyasah (Kuwait), February 25, 1986. Interview published on March 1, as reported in FBIS, March 3, 1986, p. F-1.

plan in public, calling on other Arabs to follow Jordan. Prominent Palestinian elites, such as Elias Freig, of Bethlehem, and al-Shawwa, of Gaza urged the Palestinians to pay tribute and express gratitude to Jordan's leadership. Freig said, "We breathe through Jordan; it is our gate to the Arab world...The West Bank is totally dependent on Jordan economically, politically, geographically and psychologically."[141]

The PLO maneuvered to undermine the Jordanian plan for development. The PLO representative to the UN demanded a formal and public condemnation of the plan. The Arab countries that were oil-rich restricted the distribution of its funds to the occupied territories, only allowing it to come through the established Jordanian-Palestinian Committee, against the PLO's wishes to put it under its administration. Many Palestinian commentators violently opposed the Jordanian plan. *Al-Fajr* described it as a Jordanian-Israeli plan to eliminate the PLO influence and put an end to Palestinian aspirations for independent statehood.[142]

The PLO attempted to draw closer to Israel by encouraging a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue in an endeavor to win over Israeli public opinion. Writers, journalists, academics and peace activists from both sides met and exchanged views and ideas. Jordan initially feared such contacts, until it realized the main objective of the talks was for the PLO to change its old image in the Israelis' minds into a more moderate one – just like other PLO propaganda. As the Palestinian Intifada broke out in Gaza and spread to the West Bank, new leaders arose, and soon became empowered, asking Arafat to be more forthcoming on diplomatic efforts sponsored by third parties, particularly the United States.[143]

By mid-1988 a new Palestinian leading group began to appear, including leaders of the underground and old diplomats who sought Palestinian-Israeli dialogue, such as Hanna Siniora, Sri Nusseibq, and Faisal al-Husseini. Arafat, under pressure from the newly confident Palestinian interior, had to ignore an earlier decision, preventing Siniora

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[140] Petra (Jordan News Agency), February 19, 1988.

[141] *MECS*, 1986, p. 265.

[142] *Al-Fajr*, Jerusalem, November 7, 1986.

[143] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship*, p. 184.

from meeting US Secretary of State, George Schultz. In mid-July, the same group, and the head of the Arab Studies Center in Jerusalem, met with Dutch foreign minister, Hans Vander Brock. The power of Palestinians inside the occupied territories strengthened the hands of moderate elements within the PLO itself. During the Arab Summit meeting in Algiers in early June 1988, the PLO representative, Bussam Abu-Sharif, one of Arafat's advisers, circulated a document calling for direct talks between Palestinian and Israeli leaders in order to resolve the Palestinian problem on the basis of a two-state solution. The document, which was generally assumed to have Arafat's endorsement, defined the PLO's ultimate aim was to bring a free, dignified and secure life, not only to Palestinian children, but also to Israeli children.[144] The Intifada had strengthened the PLO's drive to outline and chart its own diplomatic campaign toward Israel, independently, without waiting for other initiatives or directives.

The most dangerous development that shook Jordan's long-standing attitude that the West Bank was still officially an integral part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was the Intifada. . According to Adnan Abu-Odeh, King Hussein's political adviser, himself of Palestinian origin, the Palestinian uprising was a watershed to Jordan's relations with the West Bank. It showed that the Palestinians who were seeking self-determination interpreted his remarks to clearly mean he favored Palestinian independence. Although Israel was their first, and most immediate target, they still viewed any partnership with Jordan as an admission of such independence.[145] Furthermore, the Intifada represented a large segment of Palestinian people living under occupation who had shifted the loci of activity away from the PLO to the occupied territories. It also demonstrated that the Intifada would play a leading role in the debate over the future of Palestine. It displeased Jordan, after a 20-year-long bitter contest between Hashemites and the PLO as to which one should speak for Palestinians in the occupied territories, that it was now clear the Palestinians wished to speak for themselves. Thus the center of gravity of the Palestinian struggle for freedom, which before had moved from Damascus, Amman, Beirut and Tunis, now shifted to Gaza,

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[144] William B. Quandt (ed). *The Middle East Ten Years After Camp David.* Washington: Brookings Institutions, p. 490-93.

[145] Quandt (ed). *The Middle East Ten Years After Camp David,* p. 285.

Nablus, and Jerusalem and to hundreds of previously anonymous villages and refugee camps in the occupied territories. With the increased momentum of the uncontrollable Intifada, and with Arafat's procrastination and Israeli intransigence, Jordan's diplomatic efforts to revive the peace process were again thwarted. Their efforts were cut short by both Israel and the PLO. Jordan had to stop the initiation of the democratic process since election under occupation seemed inconceivable. Also, the Intifada, although directed against Israeli occupation, raised questions about the wisdom of Jordan's continued political and financial investment in the West Bank.[146] Jordan was afraid that the new Palestinian uprising would spread eastward to Jordan, where large numbers of pro-Intifada were located. Jordanian worries and concerns had been justified, given the fact that the United National Leadership of Intifada threatened pro-Jordanian figures, especially members of the Jordanian parliament in the West Bank, as well as members of the Jordanian regime.

Intifada, Abu Odeh said, "provided the opportunity for Jordan to review its policy."[147] On July 28, 1988 Jordan canceled the five-year economic development plan for the occupied territories, and on July 30, the king dissolved the parliament, half of its members representing the West Bank. On July 31, the king announced his decision to commence administrative and legal disengagement from the West Bank. The king's emotional and religious adherence as a Hashemite to Jerusalem excluded it from this decision, and Jordan continues to provide guardianship to the Islamic sites in the Holy City.

Jordan's move shocked most observers and had an impact on all parties involved in Palestinian affairs and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Each side was forced to make adjustments. All parties, including Israel, the US and the PLO were obliged to find a way out from Palestinian representation without Jordanian involvement. King Hussein's move was mainly an attempt to drive the concerned parties to act and abandon their evasiveness and delaying tactics. Israel, as declared on many occasions, refused to deal with the PLO, or to give up land for it, preferring to do so through a settlement with Jordan. However,

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[146] Quandt (ed). *The Middle East Ten Years After Camp David*, p. 185-187.

[147] Interview with author, Washington, DC, March 1994.

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the PLO wanted self-determination without it having to cooperate with Jordan. The Jordanian disengagement decision coincided with the election in Israel, and both Likud and Labor parties described the Jordanian move as strategic in nature. They never thought that Jordan would, one day, entirely distance itself from the Palestinian question. However, they eventually came to believe it. The US explained the Jordanian move as a political tactic adopted by King Hussein, directed to the people of the West Bank, and aimed at making them realize that the ultimate solution to their issue is a confederation of the West Bank and Jordan.[148]

Palestinians in the West Bank began to draw their own maps and identify their interests. Palestinian elites began to discuss their vision of a two-state solution. The PNC, convened only four months after the Jordanian disengagement, endorsed the notion of a two-state solution, as well as their public acceptance of UN 242, which they had refused to accept since 1967. During this conference, Arafat was elected chairman. The new flexibility in the PLO policy toward peace did not get an Israeli response until Shamir and, before him Rabin, suggested conducting elections in Gaza and the West Bank to choose whom they could negotiate a framework for autonomy with. This option did not work due to its impracticability in meeting the minimum level of Palestinian aspirations. On his visit to the United States in April 1989, Shamir suggested a four-point peace initiative, which also didn't work.

A Palestinian religious group expressed its resentment over Israel's harsh punitive measures against Intifada activists, as well as against the increased concessions presented to Israel by the PLO. It also resented the deadlock on the political front.[149] This group, of Islamic tradition and having grown up in the West Bank, had the support of the Muslim Brotherhood in confronting the PLO. Israel took advantage of their rise and gave them space to challenge the PLO. Later on, the group was identified by the name Hamas. From the 1990s to the present, PLO-Hamas relations have been fluctuating due to their

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[148] *Middle East International,* August 5, 1988, p. 4.

[149] Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization,* p. 202.

different views of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and strategies for conducting it. Israel, for its part, has always been involved internally in trying to end the Intifada, as well externally.

E. PALESTINIANS UNDER THE JORDANIAN UMBRELLA AT THE MADRID PEACE CONFERENCE

The idea of an International Peace Conference for the Middle East is not recent. The form it has taken at present actually dates back to the time when Security Council Resolution 338 was passed during the 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict. The Security Council demanded the full implementation of Resolution 242, under the appropriate auspices, and the opening of negotiations between the parties concerned. An international peace conference was held in Geneva from August 23 to September 7, 1983. Out of 157 members of the United Nations, 137 attended the conference. However, it was boycotted by Israel and the United States. The 1983 conference issued a declaration demanding that a real conference be held under UN auspices with the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO, plus the US, the USSR and other countries. The United States refused to deal with the PLO, and they adopted certain conditions that the PLO must meet before joining any international peace conference. The United States began contacts with the PLO in December 1988, after the PLO recognized Israel's right to exist, accepted UN resolutions 242 and 338 (resolutions that called for an exchange of land for peace, and renounced terrorism, respectively).[150]

The Madrid Peace Conference began on October 30, 1991, with the backing of the United States after the end of the Gulf War, under the chairmanship of the United States and the Soviet Union. The conference was held on the eve of the demise of the Soviet Union, which created a change not only in the prevailing balance of power between Arab confronting states and Israel, but conflicting parties' perceptions of the conflict changed, as well. The use of force to implement the UN resolution against Iraq reminded many of several UN resolutions pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict. existing only on paper, without action, due to Israeli rejection (always backed by the U.S). The US was accused of double standards. The US took this into consideration and declared

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[150] Congressional Research Service, December 2001.

that the Palestine issue would be dealt with soon. The destruction of Iraqi power weakened the Arab regional order, which became part of the broader Middle East order, in which countries such as Turkey, Israel and Iran compete for hegemony. In Jordan's view, the existence of the United States in the region, mainly in the Gulf area, helps maintain the stability and security of the region, in addition to protecting US interests.

Fulfilling his words, President H. W. Bush announced on March 6, 1991 (in the wake of the Gulf War) that he would pursue Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. He dispatched Secretary of State, James Baker, to the Middle East, where he met with Palestinian leaders from the occupied territories.[151] Baker's eight trips to the region, along with his contacts with the Palestinians, Jordanians, Israelis, Syrians, Egyptians and others led to peace talks in Madrid on October 30, 1991.[152] At Madrid and subsequent meetings, the United States and Israel formally treated the Palestinians as part of the Jordanian delegation, not as a separate entity.

Baker had background knowledge of the conflicts, as well as possessing knowledge of the concerns and demands of each party, all of which he had formed when he tried in 1989-1990 to convince the Israelis and the Palestinians to negotiate a plan for autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. Baker was confronted with the impediment posed by the ambiguous Palestinian representation. The Israelis still refused to deal with the PLO. Differences over Jerusalem and the settlements were another problem he had to address.

The US decided to exclude the PLO from participating in the conference due to its having sided with Saddam Hussein during the first Gulf War. According to Baker, the PLO had effectively destroyed itself. In the projected peace, then, the Palestinians would not be represented by the PLO.[153] The solution to this obstacle faced by the US would be either to leave it to Jordan to select representatives, or select representatives from the occupied territory. King Hussein declared, in a preemptive signal, that Jordan would not

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[151] Congressional Research Service, December 2001.

[152] *Facts on File*, March 6, 1991, p. 156E.

[153] Testimony to the House of Representatives, Foreign Operations Committee, May 22, 1991.

serve as a substitute for the Palestinians under any circumstances.[154]   However, the Jordanian Foreign Minister at the time, Taher Al-Masri, himself of Palestinian origin, told Secretary of State Baker that Jordan had planned, during the 1985 Amman Accord with Palestine, to form a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to negotiate a peace settlement with Israel. Al-Masri reiterated that Jordan did not seek to represent Palestinians; however, it would be willing to form a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation in order to provide an umbrella for them if they wanted it.[155]

King Hussein made it clear that the Palestinians inside the occupied territories should decide, and whose views should be addressed. The king said in an interview:

> The real Palestinian nationalist, in my opinion, is the one who has been subject to hardship for years, much more than someone who is sitting outside the territories pontificating about nationalist matters from a position of comfort...people who have lived far from hardships, that have lasted all these many years, have no right to offer advice on what must and must not be done.[156]

Baker visited the region on March 10, and met Palestinian representatives from the territories who were not PLO members, but who were loyal to it, as the PLO was flexible in approaching the peace process. It was even ready to give concessions to the United States in order to accept its representation of Palestinians if required, and its continued contacts with the interior produced loyal people who would serve these objectives.

The time was passing quickly, and the composition and form of the Palestinian delegation was not yet resolved. Israel insisted it had to agree on the members provided that there would be no one among the members from the Diaspora or Jerusalem. After checking all options, it was found that a Palestinian-Jordanian delegation under the Jordanian umbrella would be feasible and acceptable to Israel and the US. Although Jordan did not impose or ask to provide the umbrella, but accepted the idea in accordance with its moral obligations toward their Palestinian brethren. Thus, they were able to

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[154] *New York Times,* March 12, 1991.

[155] Interview with Al-Masri, Jordanian television, April 13, 1991.

[156] *Jerusalem Post,* August 22, 1991.

participate and decide on their own future, since Jordan was no longer representing them. Still, the Palestinians expressed their concern about the Jordanian stand. The Palestinian spokesperson for the delegation, Hanan Ashrawi, explained that the option of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation depended on whether there was enough long-term political agreement with Jordan based on equality and respect for each side's sovereignty.[157]

Jordan was used as a "bridge" for the Palestinians to cross in arriving at the peace conference; however, this raised political concerns for the Palestinians. The parties to the conference agreed on a two-track approach for negotiations: between the Arab states and Israel, and between Israel and the Palestinians. Also the parties agreed that Palestinian-Israeli negotiations would include two phases: the first phase of which would lead to Palestinian interim self-rule for five years; the second phase would include the remaining and outstanding issues, to be settled mutually, by both the Israelis and the Palestinians.

To eliminate Palestinian concerns and suspicion toward Jordan, King Hussein, in a May press conference with Secretary of State Baker, said that Jordan favored the joint delegation idea, but he emphasized that only the Palestinian members in the delegation would address their issues with Israel.[158] He felt that the Palestinians had to refer to Jordan to organize this delegation and its functions. In October, the PLO sent a delegation to Jordan to organize and coordinate the procedural matters of Palestinian representation. The Palestinian delegation, under PLO guidance, stressed their distinct status. Both sides agreed upon the joint delegation and produced a working plan. It outlined the composition of both delegations, and allowed for each side to assign one or two members to attend the other side's negotiations with Israel at the Madrid conference. Eventually, the Palestinian representation was accomplished in a way that enabled them to participate in the peace conference through the Jordanian umbrella.

The first four rounds of Arab-Israeli peace talks were held in Washington, DC, under US auspices. The fourth round of bilateral talks in March 1992, this time among the four Arab delegations (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians), ended in a

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[157] Ashrawi interview with *Al-Fajr*, 29 July 1991.

[158] Eight o'clock news bulletin, Jordanian television, May 14, 1991.

stalemate. The Israeli negotiators asserted their claim that the West Bank and Gaza were disputed territories, since no side had proper sovereignty over them before 1967. While the PLO had delegated Jordan to negotiate with Israel to restore the occupied territories, and Jordan could easily address its legal claims to the lands on the basis of Resolution 242, the lack of an agreement between Jordanians and Palestinians on the issue of sovereignty undermined Jordan's ability to address the proper legal claims to land.[159]

The Palestinian National Council urged the PLO to make continued Palestinian participation in the peace talks with Israel conditional on recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.[160] Palestinian leaders were astonished by the PLO suggestion, which brought back the confederation idea with Jordan, which would undercut their efforts to establish an independent sovereign entity separate from Jordan. Some analyzed the proposal as a tactical move to overcome the Israeli arguments about the status of the occupied territories.

The PLO had not abandoned its endeavors to be the official, main Palestinian actor involved in the negotiations. During the peace talks in Washington, Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, did not grant any concessions of territories to the Palestinians, but he had delayed the process, the delay indirectly serving the PLO. As time went by, the Palestinians were forced to negotiate more directly.

New Israeli-Palestinian contacts took place in 1992, through the good will of the Norwegian government, who were on reasonably good terms with both parties. The main architect behind the plan was Johan Jorgen Holst, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Terje Rod-Larson and Mona Juul. The negotiations were conducted in total secrecy, until signed on August 20, 1993, to the surprise of most countries including Jordan and Palestinian leaders.

Jordanians and Palestinians, after the entire struggle to be active members of the new, broader Middle East, still had to decide on the form of their future relations through an accepted formula.

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[159] Op. cit, p. 15.

[160] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship*, p. 203.

V. SCENARIOS FOR FUTURE RELATIONS

The history of Jordanian-Palestinian relations is characterized by tension and misunderstanding. Mutual suspicion and mistrust have been apparent, not only in the leadership, but between members of the two communities in both the east and west banks of the Jordan River. Each side has often accused the other of conspiracy and betrayal. The struggle of between the leaders on both banks, over time, and since Abdullah I's attempts to annex Palestine to his dynasty, have generated different perceptions, by which each side views the other. The early tension and struggle for power between King Abdullah and the Mufti (and his group) has continued on both sides, although the actors and policies have differed.

Differences in the views among certain leading individuals have influenced their judgment, often negatively affecting their actions and consequently the entire relationship.[161] The legacy of the past struggle over Palestine has made the Palestinians fear that Jordan may yet try to reclaim the West Bank for Jordan, not Palestine. The repeated accusations that the Hashemites were dealing with the Israelis have further complicated the relations. On the Jordanian side, the lessons learned from the events of the 1970's when the PLO often attempted to take over Jordan's dominance in the area has overshadowed any improvement in their relations. Relations did eventually improve, however, reaching a high point following the 1990-91 Gulf War, when there was joint participation at the Madrid Conference. However, relations suffered a setback when Jordan learned of the secret Oslo talks. Eventually, a group of Jordanian nationalists started to push for hardening the Jordanian stand, away from the Palestinian issue, fearing that this would destabilize Jordan. Moreover, this hard-line, East Bank nationalist group began to suspect that King Hussein might have his own agenda, namely in attempting to recruit Palestinian support for his leadership from both banks. Conversely, the Palestinians feared that the King might try to obstruct the emergence of an independent Palestinian statehood setup on Palestinian soil. Another major concern for the East

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161 Mark Heller, *A Palestinian State: The Implications for Israel.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983.

Bankers has been the domination of Palestinians' the private sector wealth by Jordan. Thus, there was fear that Jordan would harvest the benefits of any economic growth, whereas the East Bankers working mostly in the public sector would lose out. [162]

Reviewing the history of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, a clear need arises to restructure their future. These relations had, more or less, been integrated up to the 1967 war. They then took on different forms, due to the rise of new Palestinian actors, as well as to changes at the regional and international levels. Future Jordanian-Palestinian relations will recognize that the Palestinian National Authority has done much—they have labored toward the establishment of institutions, in the hope that future negotiations with Israel would culminate in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The political formula that should govern future Jordanian-Palestinian relations will be decided by the people and leadership of both peoples. If not affected by Arab and regional actors, the result may be a form of confederation or separation, since the Hashemite federal option was not welcomed by Palestinians.

A.   THE CONFEDERATION SCENARIO: A PALESTINIAN OPTION

A confederation is a contractual union of states, whose members retain sovereignty, where several unities are so connected so as to constitute one body politic. In a confederation, sovereignty is entirely retained by the constituent units and, instead, power is transmitted from the lower level to the high. The central organs of a confederal arrangement do not have direct jurisdiction over the citizens of its constituent states. The ultimate power or sovereignty resides in the individual units making up the confederation. These forms of relations were repeated often up until the Oslo talks and the Declaration of Principles in 1993 between Israel and the PLO. In the realm of international relations, a confederation is not a form of government that has rigid rules or concrete definitions. While Palestinians tends to interpret a confederation as a sort of union of states, Jordanians prefer to describe it in terms of merely a way to get the closest relations between both sides. The Palestinian interpretation involves a particular legal political framework, which was significant from their point of view.[163] The Palestinian

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[162] Schirin Fathi, *Jordan: An Invented Nation?* Hamburg: Deusches Orient Institute, 1994.

[163] Heller, *A Palestinian State.*

perception of confederation might exclude any sort of federal or unitary ties with Jordan. This is why whenever Palestinian leaders discuss the probability of confederation with Jordan; they directly tie this notion to the creation or establishment of a Palestinian state. Up to the present time, both sides have differing notions of just what a confederation, or a state, is. Moreover, the majority of the populations of Jordan and Palestinian do not agree on confederation, federation, or any form of political unification. Palestinian elites differ from their people, in viewing confederations as a sort of unofficial arrangement that can be enacted by a joint political pronouncement. Hanan Ashrawi commented on reports released about a possible Jordanian-Palestinian agreement to establish a "Jordanstine" by saying, "The idea was raised as part of a search for cover for Palestinians, and we are talking about a political, not constitutional, confederation with Jordan."[164] When the Palestinians were looking to achieve a juridical unity of the Palestinian people, one of the PLO's key aims, it is trying to create a distinctive Palestinian entity in the occupied territories.

Palestinian elites debated the feasibility and importance of formulating confederal arrangements with Jordan. One of the prominent Palestinian political figures, Faisal Al-Husseini, announced publicly that the confederation idea with Jordan was meant to solve some important issues, which would arise after the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, such as borders of the state and its requisites.[165] While Ashrawi focused on using this confederation as a means of diplomacy aimed at establishing independence, Al-Husseini believed that this sort of relation would be most important *after* obtaining independence. A more liberal Palestinian perception of the confederation was the one elaborated by Khalid Al-Hassan, the chief of the foreign committee of the Palestinian National Authority. Al-Hassan proposed establishing a triangle of confederation consisting of Jordan, Israel and Palestinians that closely resembles the Swiss type of confederation.[166]

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[164] *Mideast Mirror*, March 17, 1992, p. 9.

[165] Op. cit.

[166] Kahlid al-Hassan, *Itihad Confederal, ala al-Namat al-Sweisri*, in English *(A Swiss-Like Confederation)*. Cairo, Egypt: Al-Aharam, March 11, 1992, p. 15.

Although the Jordanian government tried in the past to encourage the PLO to come to an agreement with Jordan on some restructuring of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, the PLO avoided committing itself to any form, awaiting solutions that would lead to independence and the founding of a distinct entity. The current Jordanian policy is focused on Jordan first, and concerns how to move forward and promote its stagnant economy, but still it would offer its support to the Palestinians in search of peace and independence. King Hussein, influenced by Jordanian nationalist pressures, told Arafat to drop the word confederation from his political dictionary, and not to discuss the idea with him anymore, not even any other forms.[167]

It seems that the sides are not ready to discuss the confederation idea. They are influenced by past experiences, i.e., when they competed for control and dominance of the same territory, and when they fought each other in Jordan. The present circumstances, as well as the uncertainties of future solutions to the conflict, tend to support this trend. Jordanians realized that the Palestinians wanted to use the confederation idea, in the short run, to exploit political advantages rather than long-term association, as verbalized in King Hussein's proposed 1972 United Arab Kingdom.

The Jordanian government has apparently calculated that the potential benefits from such a future association outweigh the risks. Palestinians used the idea to preempt any Jordanian-Israeli agreement and to overcome the Israeli refusal to discuss territorial issues, in addition to using it to eliminate Israeli fears of a Palestinian state in the future. Furthermore, the idea reminded the Palestinians in Diaspora of one of the PLO's non-negotiable goals: the unity of the Palestinian people.[168] The Palestinian tactics of using this idea made Jordanians realize that there was a lack of sincerity to preserve the unity of the two sides, but, instead, it was being used as a means to achieve political ends. Eventually, amidst contrasting views, the two sides have preferred to wait until a final solution is reached before being certain that the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations will actually lead to an Israeli withdrawal. If this were not to occur, Jordanian officials would

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[167] Speech by King Hussein at a meeting of high-ranking Jordanian Army officers, FBIS-NES-94-001, January 3, 1994, p. 49.

[168] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship*, p. 212.

not prefer a confederation with a stateless people. This concern is justified, especially since the parties have failed to reach a deal on outstanding issues left from Oslo to the present. Refugee issues, as one of these outstanding issues in addition to Jerusalem and water rights, are a key issue to Jordan. .Jordan hosts 41%of Palestinian refugees and 90% of displaced persons (DPs).[169] The refugees who fled Palestine after the 1948 war and 1967 constituted about 60% of the total refugees. Some acquired Jordanian citizenship, and a large number preferred not to, in the hope of a quick return to their homes. After the Jordanian disengagement from the West Bank in 1988, a new cut-off date became determining. [170] Three weeks afterward, on August 20, the Jordanian government issued a statement that defined Palestinians as all permanent residents of the West Bank as of July 13, 1988.[171] Still, above all, the legal status of Palestinians was affected by the union of Jordan and the West Bank in 1950, when unification did not prejudice the Palestinians rights to reside in their historic homeland.[172]

The Declaration of Principles (DOP) between the Palestinians and Israel was an abrupt development in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Palestinians negotiated alone with the Israelis in Oslo to address the Palestinian question, separate from other Arab issues, as the Israelis always preferred. Practically, the PLO has become the Palestinian representative, as demonstrated in these negotiations, which imply Israel's recognition of the PLO.

Palestinians in Jordan, mainly members of influential groups, such as the pro-Hashemite, Palestinian prominent families and the leaders of the private sector, are in favor of an association with Jordan, whether a settlement on the occupied territories is reached or not. On the other hand, a large segment of groups among the East Jordanian community prefer that Jordan maintain its policy of disengagement with regards to the Palestinian issue. However, the Hashemites' long-standing vision (i.e., since King

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[169] Refugee fact sheet. Palestine Monitor web site.
http://www.palestinemonitor.org/new_web/factsheet_refugees.htm. Accessed March 10, 2004.

[170] Ibid.

[171] "Jordan and the Middle East Peace Process." Jordan Embassy web site.
http://www.jordanembassy.ro/foreignpolicy/jordan_pp.htm. Accessed March 10, 2004.

[172] Linda L. Lane, *Home and Homeland: The Dialogics of Tribal and National Identities in Jordan.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994, chapter 1.

Abdullah's rule) has been in support of Arab federation. Therefore, people often assume that the Hashemites would not mind the federation idea. For this reason, Palestinian leaders and people keep repeating this notion of unity, whether in sincerity or for political reasons. The regional powers, including Arab states and Israel, have their interests and preferences of the future form of governance in the occupied territories. Israel prefers to deal with Jordan in this context, rather than with a Palestinian state. The Arab states would like to see an independent state in the occupied territories after the withdrawal of Israel if the ongoing peace process succeeds.

The war in Iraq has made the situation in the Middle East even more unstable. The balance of power, which was already in favor of Israel, has been exacerbated, and the Iraqi threat eliminated. This gives Israel an upper hand in imposing its will on the Arabs, especially the Palestinians who have had to meet hard conditions before the peace process is revived again. As for unavoidable Jordanian-Palestinian relations, both sides have, at this stage, accepted the status quo and manage their affairs on an ad hoc basis. This management was restricted to daily procedural relations and never reached a level of political coordination, even at critical times, like the Madrid Conference, when the Palestinian delegation arrived too late for joint coordination, and they were not prepared to fully negotiate their issues.

As mentioned before, suspicion and lack of trust between the two sides were not new, but have reached their highest levels twice.[173] First, the PLO went to Oslo and reached an accord with Israel without prior notice or coordination with Jordan. Second, the Palestinians signed an economic agreement with Israel in Cairo, on May 4, 1994, on the scope of the Gaza-Jericho agreement. Jordan expressed its resentment toward the PLO for disregarding Jordanian economic interests. Jordan's frustration with the PLO attitudes was demonstrated in Amman's reaction to the Cairo agreement. King Hussein did not respond to President Mubarak's invitation to attend the signing ceremonies. However, Jordan sent the Minister of Foreign Affairs to attend the ceremony in an effort to avoid further degradation of already-strained Jordanian-Egyptian relations.[174]

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[173] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship*, p. 182.

[174] *Mideast Mirror*, May 4, 1994, p. 14.

Jordanian officials expressed their dissatisfaction with the deal. The Gaza-Jericho agreement, coupled with the economic accord, amounted to a PLO decision to disengage from Jordan and merge with Israel.[175] With this step, declared a Jordanian official, Arafat dealt the *coup de grace* to chances of a further link between Jordan and Palestine.[176] Jordanian leaders accused Palestinians of yielding to Israeli pressures at the expense of Jordanian interests and the prospects of long relations between both sides.

The Palestinians were trying to establish bilateral relations with Israel, thinking that such relations would be advantageous in establishing a joint Palestinian-Israeli approach not only at an economic level, but also as a step toward a joint stand in response to regional issues in the future. A Palestinian official said in this regard, "Irrespective of what might have been the actual motives of the PLO leadership, the agreements provide the basis for both an Israeli hegemonic position in Palestinian affairs as well as potential cooperation, possibly strategic, toward third parties in the region in the future."[177]

It was evident that Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation did not exist, which meant that no understanding was reached to best serve their interests. A sense of competition and rivalry continues, and this explains why the PLO coordinates more closely with Cairo – which Jordan sees as having created the PLO as anti-Hashemites during the Arab Cold War – than Amman and the PLO remained loyal to the Egyptian approach.

The concept of building a confederation has failed at the Arab level. The notion has only consolidated divisiveness and aggravated contradictions between various Arab regimes. It has also encouraged foreign intervention and failed to facilitate the building of a coherent community of interests between Arab states.[178] The current Palestinian leadership proposed the establishment of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation only as a unity of convenience. It enabled the Palestinian leadership to work independent of Jordan while preserving its links with Palestinians there.[179] More importantly, lip service to

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[175] *Mideast Mirror*, May 4, 1994, p. 14.

[176] *Al-Shab*, Amman, Jordan, May 5, 1994, p. 11.

[177] Yesir Abdrabo, member of the PLO Executive Committee, in *Al-Shab*, Amman, Jordan, May 1994.

[178] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship*, p. 218-219.

[179] Ibid., p. 219.

confederation, even if taken seriously, still keeps the PLO in good stead with its Arab confederalist mentors. However, the formula that led to its failure would seem to be inappropriate for future interaction.[180]

Jordan wants to build a strong and transparent relationship with the Palestinians, stemming from strong historical bonds, regardless of some incidents that muddied the atmosphere for some time. This will tie between the Jordanian and Palestinian people together, as well as away from Arab solidarity. Jordanian concerns are not restricted to the present time, nor to the economic field. It recognizes PLO rapprochement to Israel, or its regional alignment with the Egyptian-Saudi axis, and is concerned with these options in the future.[181] Due to the demographic structure, and in absence of mutual demographic parity between Jordan and any future Palestinian government in the West Bank, East Bank Jordanians fear that formal association with the Palestinians will end up absorbing them. East Bank Jordanians put more emphasis on Jordan's stability and integrity; however, at the same time, they support the Palestinians' strife to preserve their national unity.

The confederation system proved to be impotent at the Arab level and would also not work for Jordanians and Palestinians, since both sides have suffered as a result of this system during the Arab Cold War, preventing the establishment of a viable Arab order. It is not practical to continue the current status quo without any vision toward the future. Thus both sides should cooperate and consolidate their relations in preparation for the future, when a Palestinian independent entity is established.

In approaching this undertaking, Palestinians will confront many obstacles. For example, they need to build a state and a nation from scratch; they need time to move and organize; there are some commitments with Israel that tie their hands on the economic side, which is attached to Israel by earlier arrangements. They need to lay out the kind of entity they want to establish, as well as a clear vision of what kind of polity they need. In this case, they could address other remaining social, security and economic development issues. Israel would encourage a form of interdependence with the Palestinians, and this

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[180] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship*, p. 220.

[181] Ibid., p. 221.

would increase their domination of Palestinian affairs. However, regardless of the size, quantity of work and difficulties to be burdened by Palestinians, this should not prevent them from working with Jordanians to draw out their future relations based on mutual respect and welfare for both. If a Palestinian state comes into existence at the end of future peace talks, it should be independent, not beholden to any powers. To make Jordanian-Palestinian relations stronger, the issue of major concern to Jordan, i.e., the refugee situation, should be solved in a way acceptable to Jordan, which has been accommodating them for many decades.

B.   SEPARATION SCENARIO

Separation should come as a result of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state or entity separate and distinct from the Jordanian state. It could come about as a consequence of Palestinian efforts to reach a peace settlement and end the Israeli occupation. Once the occupation is ended, sovereignty and independence will be achieved. The other Palestinian alternative would be their choice to separate from Jordan, as they achieve independence from Jordan. Once this separation takes place, it will include separation of legal, political, educational and welfare systems.

Separation between both sides, in fact, was noticed as leadership reduced cooperation, and preferred to deal separately with Israel. It is quite possible that each side may establish close links with a third party which is stronger than their own, mutual links. For example, it is expected that Palestine could get closer to Egypt, or Israel, and Jordan could get closer to another country in the region. But it is also expected that their links would be limited. Palestinians should be cautious that if they drifted toward separation from Jordan while consolidating their independence from Israel, they might be pushed, indirectly, to depend on Israel, simply because they had been separated from Jordan and could not be easily accepted by Jordan to revert back for cooperation. Separation could lead to such outcomes.

Palestinians, especially their leadership, may look to separation from Jordan as a main objective toward independence. Simultaneously, they might find this an occasion to show their determination to bury the Jordanian objectives that clashed over the years with Palestinian goals for independence.

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As discussed before, Jordanians and Palestinians are waiting to see the final status of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. If it leads to a viable Palestinian state, separation from Jordan would be the Palestinian choice, and in its interest. However, if it leads only to self-rule, or non-viable state and control by Israel, which is more likely, the Palestinians would remain weak and apt to Israeli control since they are the ones in the driver's seat.

The separation scenario might be realized in stages. Israeli acquiescence will be necessary for Palestinians to achieve aspirations of an independent state on their soil, but the scenario presupposes that the Palestinians, with Jordan's acquiescence, are set on a course leading toward a Palestinian state, which is not only independent from Israel, but also dissociated with Jordan, and which has a separate identity.[182] If the emerging Palestinian state asserts its separate entity, and without proposing any form of association with Jordan, it will become a key member in the Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli triangle, functioning on an equal footing with the other two state actors, in terms of government-to-government transactions. This will pull Jordan and Palestine apart rather than bringing them closer together, and will put obstacles in the way of any third party, including Israel, which might prefer their integration.

Separation might become inevitable as a result of a Palestinian quest for independence from Israel. It is possible to discern actors in both Palestine and Jordan for whom separation would be the desired outcome. They will be the main contributors to its realization, who will be able to tap into the residual distrust of one another by Palestinians and Jordanians.

The Jordanian involvement in Palestine over the years has led some Palestinians to suspect that Jordan still has a desire in Palestine, and still aims to preclude Palestinians from real total independence there. Likewise, the legacy of events that culminated in the civil war in Jordan with Palestinians in 1970 has generated fear and anxiety for Jordanians that Palestinians might hope to make Jordan their home. At the same time, the road has been opened for separation as a result of Jordan's decision to disengage from the

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[182] Hamarneh, *Jordanian-Palestinian Relations: Where To?*

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West Bank in 1988 and the rise of a Palestinian entity under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, and now Abu Mazen, and the PA endorsed by the Oslo process. The contributory forces that would influence or bring about the separation are:[183]

1.   Political Leadership

Whether separation is an aim, and not just the result, of the Palestinian search for independence from Israel, the Palestinian leadership in the PA and PLO are likely the political actors who will contribute to this end.   The PLO leadership has a logical, historical reason to look at the Jordanian leadership with suspicion. Moreover, Jordanian contacts with the Israelis over the years have fueled PLO fear and distrust.[184]

The Palestinian focus is centered on an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza, with Jerusalem as a capital. When the PLO went to Oslo secretly, they abandoned the pretense of Arab solidarity with either the Jordanians or the Syrians. Their relations with Syria are so strained that they can expect no real assistance from President Assad. At the same time, their contacts with Jordan, although more frequent, are still characterized by mutual suspicion. The PLO thinks that the only Arab country whom they can constantly turn to for support is Egypt, because from the PLO's perspective, the Egyptian leadership can be counted on not to compete with its national preferences.[185]

Jordan's peace treaty with Israel came almost a year after signing the DOP in 1993 between the Israelis and the Palestinians. This one-year period was characterized by poor informal relations between Jordan and Israel for leaving the Jordanian leadership in the dark during Oslo. Arafat strengthened his position and leadership by assuring the Israelis during Oslo of his intentions to relieve their security concerns. His initial state-building exercise concentrated on strengthening the PA police force and bureaucracy, keeping decision-making under his control, and if needed delegated authority, though minimally, to his loyalists. Accordingly, a number of posts in his administration were given to loyalists. He had no inclination to share powers with rivals inside Palestine, or

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[183] Hamarneh, *Jordanian-Palestinian Relations: Where To?*

[184] Ibid.

[185] Sami Khazander, *Jordan and the Palestine Question: The Role of Islamic and Left Forces in Foreign Policy Making.* England: Ithaca Press, 1997.

even outside of it. The Israeli hard-line government could set about undermining Arafat's position, but would be hard-pressed to find a substitute for the Palestinian security forces to police the Palestinian community, and thereby help protect Israel.[186]

Oslo contributed to widening the gap in Jordanian-Palestinian relations, as well as led the Jordanian public, especially hard-line Transjordanians, to press the government for separation. Jordan has been, ever since Oslo, committed to avoiding any direct engagement in the dealings between the Israeli government and the Palestinian leadership.[187] As part of their tit-for-tat policy, Palestinians have not been consulted or notified of the Jordanian-Israeli peace agreement, and their leadership was affronted by the provision in the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty for King Hussein to retain the role of guardianship of the Muslim holy shrines in Jerusalem. Arafat tried in 1996 to replace the Jordanian Waqf employees, but he failed in this effort due to the king's opposition and Israeli rejection.

2. Political Systems

After Oslo, the PA was established and the Palestinian legislative council was elected. Jordanian disengagement from the West Bank led to an outcome that contributed to the establishment of the Palestinian political system, separate from that of Jordan. The qualities of the two systems are distinct. Through the PA and its security apparatus, Arafat created multiple and competing channels to the center of power. In Jordan, the king maintains a balance between different elements in the society.[188]

With respect to their actual power, the Jordanian legislature began to gain more power, especially after the 1989 elections, whereas in the Palestinian council power is still weak. Neither is supreme over the executive, but the forms this takes differs. The Palestinian system is more centralized, as Arafat did not like to share power with others. The Palestinian legislative council has been a force for separation, but the process of disassembling the old inherited legal structure, and drawing a new one, has been delayed

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[186] Sami Khazander, *Jordan and the Palestine Question: The Role of Islamic and Left Forces in Foreign Policy Making.* England: Ithaca Press, 1997.

[187] Hamarneh, *Jordanian-Palestinian Relations: Where To?*, p. 181.

[188] Ibid., p. 182.

by the debate between the legislature and the executive. The debate had been open until Arafat and the PLO managed to minimize its publicity. There is a sort of disillusionment in the system. In Jordan this sense of disillusionment was also found, but to a lesser degree that has to do with the power of the legislative toward the executive. In Jordan's 1997 election, for example, the Islamist Action Front boycotted the election, claiming that successive governments had intervened in the process at the expense of democracy. They opposed changes in the electoral law in 1993, which reduced the number of Islamist deputies to half the strength it had in 1989.[189] Although the king constitutionally had the power to alter the law, to the Islamists' reasoning it was undemocratic.

In Jordan, the judiciary works independently, and the king does not determine or interfere in the court verdicts, whereas in Palestine the president, himself, is used as a tool to reinforce separation. In Palestine courts operate at the level of summary justice to conduct military tribunals secretly, which passes sentences within hours of an arrest. The PA weakened and marginalized the formal judicial system by substituting other means of conflict resolution. The PA reinforced separation by preventing the implementation of existing Jordanian law in the West Bank. The PA objective is to have its own regulation and legislation systems that assert independence and separate entity.

Three points are of relevance here for the separation scenario. First, the links, which bound West Bankers to the Jordanian political system have been formally ended with the abolition of seats for them in the legislature, and the establishment of a separate Palestinian electoral process for both parliament and a president.[190] Second, the way the two systems are structured and conducted gives the decisive power to the head of state, which, in the Palestinian case, is set on separation.[191] Third, residual links to Jordan through the legal infrastructure in the West Bank are being ignored or dismantled.[192] Separation is underway since the Palestinians are adopting a whole new set of laws to substitute the Jordanian law in the West Bank.

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[189] Hamarneh, *Jordanian-Palestinian Relations: Where To?*, p. 180.

[190] Ibid., p. 181.

[191] Ibid., p. 182.

[192] Ibid.

3.   Political Parties

The political parties in Palestine have been undergoing a change from their role of armed struggle against Israel to their new role of participation in consolidating the Palestinian authority. They do not think that future relations with Jordan are a pressing issue. The PLO factions and prominent leaders continue to wave the flag of confederation, whether for tactical deliberation in their dealings with Israel or not. Fatah also believes this issue will be dealt with in the proper time, since it is involved in mobilizing Palestinians toward the Palestinian question; however, its leaders have not hidden their suspicion of Jordan. Other Palestinian factions of leftist communists and socialist ideologies are opponents to the peace process, and above all they oppose Jordanian policies, and have never stopped calling for separation.

The Islamist groups have not expressed their stand on this subject, although they opposed King Hussein's disengagement decision. Their perception of unity is very broad and more comprehensive, calling for uniting all Muslim nations. This trend was adopted by Hamas, Muslims Brotherhood and Islamist Action Front in both Jordan and Palestine.

Jordan's separation is demanded by the Transjordan nationalists, since it is considered the best tool to enhance and assert their identity in Jordan, once the Palestinian identity moves entirely westward. The other Jordanian groups that prefer separation are political groups, which share common ground with the PLO in seeking independence. Contrary to leftists in Palestine, the leftists in Jordan, paradoxically, moved toward the Islamist camp, only regarding the issue of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, calling for maintaining contacts and links with Palestine and waving the flag of Arab unity.

King Hussein became more conscious of the Palestinian inclination toward separation when they accused him in 1995-96 of playing the Hamas card. They claimed that Hamas attacks on Israel may not have been discouraged by Jordan in an effort to undermine Arafat and the PLO's role in the peace process.[193] The accusation was refuted

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[193] Joseph Giant and Winckler Onn, *The Jordanian-Palestinian-Israel Triangle: Smoothing the Path to Peace.* Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 1998.

bitterly by the Jordanian government and deepened its frustration at the PA, and made the Jordanian government more willing than before to stop all coordination with the PA and PLO due to their attitudes.

4.   Elites

It is well known in Jordan that nationals of Palestinian origin predominate in the private sector, whereas Transjordanians take up the public sector. This generalization is mainly reliable, however, connections and alliances exist at the most senior levels of both, and key individuals may move from the private sector to the public sector and back again easily. However, insofar as Jordanians of Palestinian origin support the nationalist cause of their brethren across the river, they may be nervous about the consequences for themselves, inside Jordan, if they are seen to be more loyal to Palestine than to the kingdom.[194]

In both Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, elite status derives from service to the state at senior levels, as well as from professional status, social heritage and independent wealth.[195] All elites, whether those working in the state bureaucracy and apparatus or in the private sector, are capable of influencing development. In Palestine there are three classes of elites: social, economic and political. These elites vary from rich commercial dealers, who were pro-Jordanian until recently, to those in the state bureaucracy and those who control the security services as lower class. In Jordan the elites within state bureaucracy and security services are Transjordanian, and the private sector elites are mostly of Palestinian origin.

The elites' attitudes towards separation vary on both sides. Family ties override other considerations. Transjordanians may be guided by their ideology and preference for separation. It is expected that state elites act to increase the state's powers and profits, which would generate competition between Jordanian and Palestinian senior employees. They might compete for international support from external powers and donor states. Consequently, these elites in both Jordan and Palestine will prefer separation, and they will hasten its steps.

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[194] Hamarneh, *Jordanian-Palestinian Relations: Where To?*, p. 180.

[195] Ibid., p. 187.

5.   Refugees

Since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, Jordan has received several waves of Palestinian refugees. Two waves of refugees arrived from Palestine in 1948 and 1967, and the last one arrived from Kuwait immediately following the 1991 Gulf War. According to UNRWA's figures for June 2003, Palestinian refugees and their descendants registered with and clients of the UN agencies number over 1.7 million of Jordan's total population of 5.5 million.[196]

Between them, Jordan, Israel and Palestine could solve the refugee problem. However, Israel's declared position is obviously against the implementation of the right of return of Palestinian refugees within the 1948 borders of Israel. Many questions have been raised around their citizenship, and the distinction between a refugee and a displaced person. Awaiting a solution to the problem, Jordan issued them passports. Some are considered Jordanian citizens, while others, including those in Gaza, are not.

If formal separation were a prospect, it would be necessary to work out who should negotiate with Israel over the fate of refugees - Jordan, the PA or both. The Jordanian leadership regards the issue of refugees as of strategic importance and the more real the possibility of separation, the more likely the Jordanian leadership would be to demand involvement in decisions on the refugee question.[197]

The displaced persons issue should also be solved. The possibility exists that Jordan could deprive them of their political rights and ask the Palestinian entity to accommodate them, which would deeply affect Jordanian-Palestinian relations. The question of identity of all Palestinians in Jordan will be on the table, giving rise to such uncertainty among Jordanians of Palestinian origin that a crisis could result with the potential to destabilize Jordan.[198] Separation would cut off both refugees and displaced persons in Jordan if they could not relocate to the Palestinian entity.[199]

[196] Géraldine Chatelard, "Jordan: A Refugee Haven." Migration Policy Institute, July 2004. Accessed from http://www.migrationinformation.org/profiles/display.cfm?ID=236, 1 March 2005.

[197] Braizat S. Musa, *The Jordanian-Palestinian Relationship*, p. 281.

[198] Hamarneh, *Jordanian-Palestinian Relations: Where To?*

[199] Ibid., p. 42.

6.   Media and Public Opinion

Media and public opinion will highlight the uncertainties, people's concern and contentions on the issues of identity and citizenship pertaining to large numbers of refugees and displaced persons in Jordan under the separation scenario. The status quo has put these issues on hold until more plausible scenarios arise upon which their fate would be determined.

Palestinian public reaction depends on the prospects for a Palestinian state as a goal for their leadership. If there is little progress towards agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, then the Palestinian populace will be forced to wonder what they stand to gain ultimately.[200] This would move the people to look to Jordan as being their safety guarantor. This would also generate a divide between aspirations and practicality.[201] The Palestinian media could be expected to highlight the case of the leadership for independent statehood, but individuals could not deliberately cut ties with Jordan for the sake of realizing that goal, unless it were real. This separation might be supported by Jordanian press since it achieves Palestinians' goals. However, public opinion would be divided on benefits and disadvantages for the average person, the elites, and businesspeople.

As for economic factors affecting separation, similarities between Jordanian and Palestinian economies could make them competitors. Regardless of the shortcomings both economies suffer from, there is no sign of cooperation. Although the Palestinian economy's integration into the region is limited, its dependence on Israel is pervasive. The economic agreements they signed with Israel bound and limited their economic options. Such economic agreements demonstrate separation from the Jordanian economy and reduced Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation. However, it seems that political difference and competition overshadowed economic cooperation, and separation in the

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[200] Mark Heller and Sari Nusseibeh, *No Trumpets, No Drums: A Two-State Settlement to Israel's Palestinian Conflict.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1991.

[201] Ibid., p. 96.

economic sphere went along. It has been suggested that economic separation between Jordan and Palestine is near when one can see Israeli and Egyptian goods and suppliers substituted for Jordanian ones.

7.   Regional and International Factors

The international community is awaiting progress in the peace process, especially between Israel and the Palestinians and between Israel and Syria. Neither the United States nor Europe has expressed their views on how Jordanian-Palestinian relations should be. [202] They hope that the peace process would end up in a just and acceptable peace that all parties in the region would embrace. The Arab states have no interest in promoting the Jordanian-Palestinian relations, and most Arab countries support the idea of an independent Palestinian state, without connections to Jordan. Egypt is particularly supportive of this idea.

Apart from their role in protecting civil rights and citizenship, civil society organizations and NGOs in both Jordan and Palestine are against separation. Jordanian professional organizations have been in the forefront of resistance to normalization of relations with Israel, which could imply their assertion of the unity of the two peoples. These organizations, due to the occupation, have not yet figured out how to conduct themselves under the PA.

In conclusion, this scenario offers clear political advantages to elements on both sides, but also explains economic drawbacks from an increase in Jordanian-Palestinian economic competition, once separation is initiated. Separation would not offer an easy solution to unresolved issues, such as the granting of passports, identity and the refugee situation, if these were not resolved by agreement within the ongoing peace process.

Finally, expectations and aspirations remain uncertain and unguaranteed. There is no guarantee that the peace process would culminate in an independent and viable Palestinian state that would achieve the dreams of the people. Perhaps Palestinians should

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[202] Hamarneh, *Jordanian-Palestinian Relations: Where To?*

have kept their close coordination with Jordan parallel to their negotiations with Israel. In doing so, they would still have received support from Jordan if they did not achieve what they aim for from Israel.

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